# politics

November, 1946

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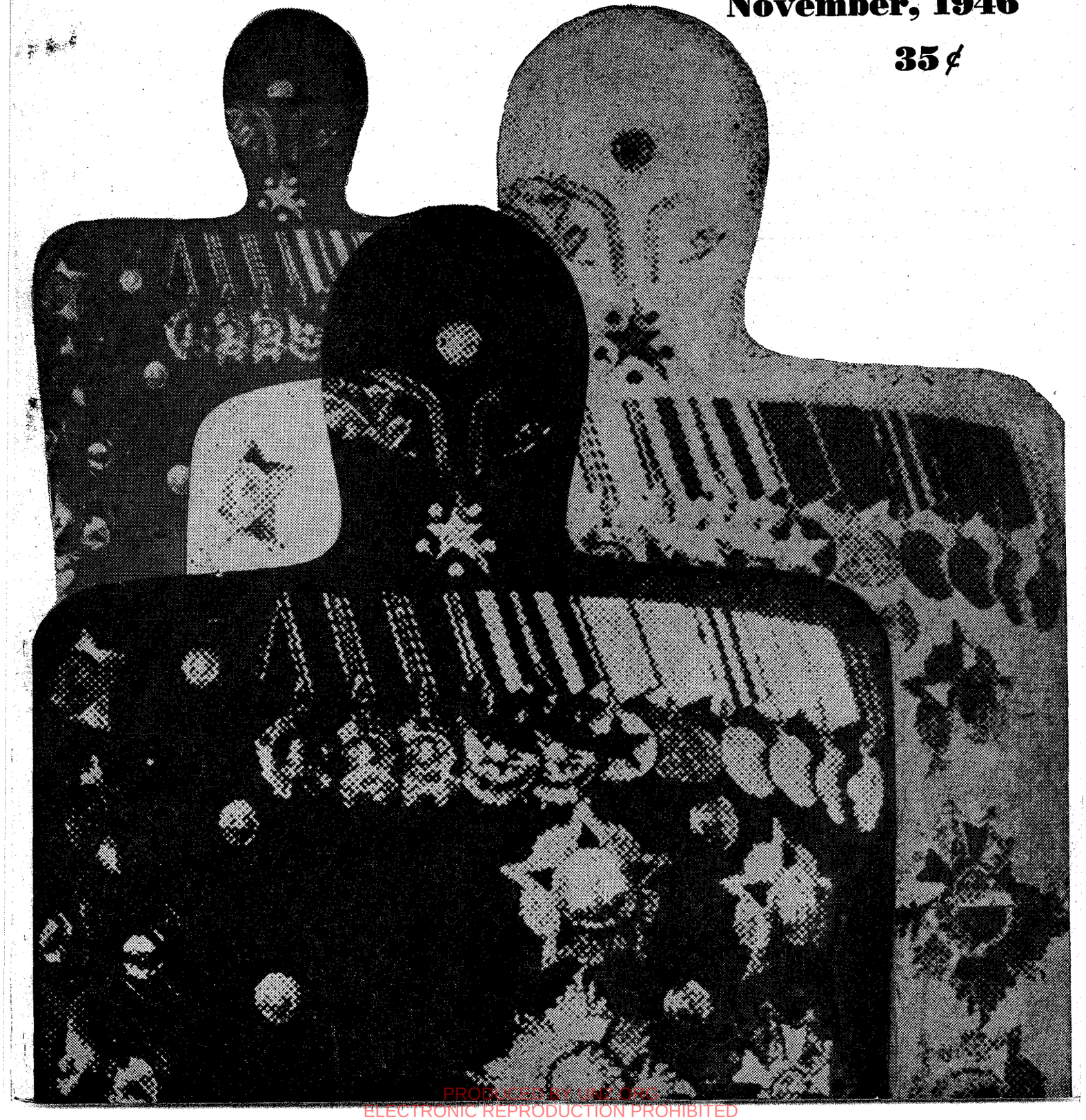

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# Comment

***The Truth About U. N.*** It is time that someone stated the truth about the United Nations, now getting under way again not far from here. The liberal weeklies consecrate special issues to this "last, best hope" of the democratic peaceloving peoples of the world; the daily press gives us columns of eyewitness reports on the smile (or was it a smirk?) observed on the face of Molotov at a certain point in a recent debate; the President of the United States "WARNS UN DELEGATES WAR FEAR EXAGGERATED"; the Committee for Non-Violent Revolution pickets a U.N. luncheon with placards denouncing it as a cover for imperialist war.

All these reactions appear to me excessive. The U.N. is not a parliament of peaceloving peoples; it is not an arena of history-in-the-making; it is not even what the CNVR pickets think it is: a way of lulling the masses with talk of peace while war is prepared behind the scenes. It is, quite simply, a bore.

Before denouncing this as the judgment of an intellectual snob, the reader should consult the newspaper reports of the reaction of the people of New York—the masses, if you please—to the 96-car cavalcade which bore the U.N. delegates from the Battery to City Hall for the official welcoming ceremony. The people in the streets were "polite but notably unenthusiastic"; no torn paper or tickertape fluttered down from the Wall Street skyscrapers; the crowds were "insignificant" compared to those which had turned out to welcome Nimitz and Eisenhower. So apathetic, indeed, was the public response that the president of U.N., in his speech at City Hall, felt obliged to note that the reception "was not quite as enthusiastic as we could have wished for." Everybody cheered up, however, after the next event: a luncheon in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria, where a "distinguished" audience provided a "much more cordial atmosphere." All of which goes to show, as has been often observed in these pages, how much more intelligent people who cannot afford to pay $12 a plate for lunch are than those who can. Also how much smarter, in some ways, the average citizen (or, if you prefer, "the masses") is than most of us intellectuals, who get so accustomed to reacting to abstract concepts—which is what the U.N. is—that we forget to ask whether there is anything much underneath.

The reason the U.N. is boring is that it is an extreme example of the kind of abstraction—*the* proletarian revolution is another—which means nothing one way or another to any specific human being. As though a "nation" (i.e., 140 Americans, including myself) were not meaningless enough, now we have a lot of individuals "representing" the governments which "represent" the nations. The delegates to this fiction superimposed on two other fictions appear to be as bored and impotent and baffled as the rest of us are. The U.N. shows why it is difficult for a radical today to place himself in relation to international affairs, or to any kind of thought or action which goes beyond his own personal experience, whether as an intellectual living in New York City or a member of a cooperative group farming some acres in Georgia. Speaking as the former, I cannot see that the U.N. is either a hope or a menace; just a bore.

***The French 5-Year Plan*** While the press devoted its front pages to U.N. trivia, it did its usual job of burying significant news in the back pages. Two reports are specially interesting in the light of the analysis, elsewhere in this issue, of the French nationalization program.

A Paris dispatch in the *N. Y. Times* of Oct. 16:

"What is probably the most comprehensive and detailed plan ever put together to guide a non-totalitarian economy is nearing completion in the Government's French Government's planning commission. Ultimately to effect the utilization of 18 to 20 per cent of the national income, the plan—known as the Monnet Plan after Jean Monnet, chairman of the commission—will set specific objectives for all of France's major industries and for export and import trade over five years. [Why do economic planners always think in terms of just five years? Why not four or six ever? Is it that, for cultural and psychological reasons, we see 5 as the first major stopping-place after 1? Or is there in the real economic world a five-year rhythm?—D.M.] The key to the program is a plan for five basic industries: steel, transport, coal, cement and electricity.

"The French people will be confronted with the unpleasant choice of giving up their traditional attitude toward modern

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large-scale production or their traditional standard of comfort. The lesson, M. Monnet says, must be driven home that France cannot afford not to make the tremendous effort called for by the new plan."

This last, as Gelo and Andrea show, is the reverse of the truth: planned economy, as understood here, means large-scale production *and* a low standard of living. And in fact the report continues: "One job is convincing the French people that the drive for modernization of antiquated plants must come before reconstruction in a strict sense . . . There is no time to rebuild homes because new factories must come first."

***The Ruhr Is Socialized*** Had someone told Lenin and Trotsky in 1923, when they were striving to bring off a German revolution, that two decades later the greatest industrial complex in Europe—the Ruhr-Rhine coal, steel, chemical and machinery industries—would be (a) socialized, (b) by the British Labor Party, without either (c) world capitalism showing much interest one way or the other, or (d) the cause of communism being advanced perceptibly—I say if some one had told them that, those Marxist politicians would have been, putting it mildly, incredulous. Yet all these things have come about. In his report to Commons on Oct. 23, Foreign Minister Bevin announced that basic industries in the British zone would not be returned to their former owners. "As an interim measure, we have taken over possession and control of the coal and steel industries and have vested them in the commander-in-chief. Similar steps will shortly be taken in the case of heavy chemical and manufacturing industries. Our intention is that these industries shall be owned and controlled by the public . . . We shall support all German plans for socialization of basic industries."

This is perhaps the most important foreign-policy decision by the Labor Government since the relaxation of the British grip on India. It shows how thoroughly the Nazis—and the war—destroyed the basis of capitalist class-rule in Germany; it raises the question of whether basic industries in the American zone will now also be socialised, and if so what about our world crusade for "free enterprise," and if not, how can the two zones be economically integrated according to Byrnes' proposal of last summer? Above all, what is the relation of this step to the cause of socialism? That public ownership is preferable to a return of the rule of German big-business seems obvious. Yet is collectivization imposed by the conqueror without any reference to the aspirations of the German people—no mass expression even exists of these anyway—of basic political significance? May it not be used as easily—more so, indeed—to lay the foundation for German war production under British tutelage as for a brave new world of freedom and socialism?

Here we have the most gigantic economic change possible in Europe—and yet it makes little stir (the *N. Y. Times* actually failed even to report this part of Bevin's speech; my information is drawn from *P.M.*) and its political import is ambiguous. The "point" in politics has shifted far away from the Marxian "economic base."

***Nuremberg*** The definitive judgment on the Nuremberg trial is to be found in the October 7 issue of *Barron's*, a financial weekly: "The difference between justice and vengeance is that the former applies equally to all." An enormous amount has been written pro and con the judicial validity of the trial. But *Barron's* seems to have cut to the heart of the matter—as, incidentally, did Georg Mann in his "Morality at Nuremberg" in our January issue. If aggressive warfare is a crime, then may we expect a Leningrad Trial in which the leaders of Russia's attack on Finland in 1939-1940 will be duly tried and executed?* If "crimes against humanity" are to be punished, when may we look forward to the hanging of those who killed millions of Kulaks, saboteurs, and other "enemies of society" in *their* camps; or to the execution of those who put to death without trial or ceremony some hundred thousand men, women and children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? "The difference between justice and vengeance is that the former applies equally to all."

***Murder, Compounded*** It is a little ironical that so much protest has arisen about the moral basis of the Nuremberg Trial and so little—in fact, I have seen none—about the morality of certain other executions we have been carrying out in Germany. Ironical because the defendants at Nuremberg had all of them committed or connived at unthinkable atrocities, while the defendants in these other trials were, in my opinion, guilty of no crime at all. I refer to the executions by the U. S. Army of several score German civilians who were found by our courts martial to have taken part in the mob killings of American fliers forced down in Germany. Lynching is ugly anywhere, and as a pacifist I oppose the killing of anyone. But was it not perfectly natural and, in terms of the commonly accepted morality (I assume the U. S. Army is not pacifist in philosophy), entirely justified for German civilians to kill the fliers who had killed so many of them? What should an airman expect who has been dropping blockbusters on helpless civilians, if he is unlucky enough to fall into the hands of his victims? He gave *them* no chance to surrender. Why should they accept *his* surrender? It would be unfortunate, of course, if civilians got the idea that they could with impunity strike back at the technicians who massacre them with scientific devices from two miles in the air. It is understandable why the Army wants to "make some examples." But the justice is all on the side of the hanged, not the hangmen.

***The Comedy Is Ended*** The comedy of wage and price controls is ended. The AFL seamen, backed by their employers, mounted a strike which broke wage controls wide open and, a few weeks later, resulted in the disintegration of the Wage Stabilization Board. (Curiously, the Board was torpedoed by the withdrawal of its *employer* members. I have seen no explanation of why the labor members stood by the Board while the employers deserted it. The episode seems to show both the incompetence of labor leadership and the hostility of U. S. business, regardless of its immediate economic interests, towards State capitalism.) And now OPA has been shattered by another strike, of the meat industry. As in the case of the maritime strike, Truman had two sensible alternatives: either to give in at once, or else to break the strike, which in this case would have meant using his wartime powers—which are, significantly, still in force,

* The concept of "aggressive warfare" cannot withstand serious historical analysis—at least not in the 20th century, in which the preparing and waging of war has become the chief business of all first-class powers. I recall the shock of enlightenment when I first read Sidney Fay's great two-volume work, *The Origins of the World War*. Using the then-available secret archives of all the warring governments—many of them made public by the Bolsheviks—Fay showed with tedious and fascinating scholarship that responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 lay equally between four powers, two "bad" ones (Austria and Germany), and two "good" ones (France and Russia). But those were innocent days, when even Progressive editors reasoned and weighed evidence in arriving at a judgment on such matters. Professor Fay of Harvard is now dead; his book certainly is; there is an intolerably old-fashioned flavor to the detachment with which he viewed history, as Colonel-General Zhdanov could tell us, or, for that matter, Associate Justice Jackson, of the U. S. Supreme Court.

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since the war is not officially ended—to requisition and distribute the meat. Of course, he did neither, and, just as in the maritime strike, was forced to reverse his policy a few days after having affirmed it in the strongest terms. Thus the maximum damage was done: the public got neither steaks nor controlled prices, suffering all the disadvantages of both a free and a controlled economy, without either the automatic adjustments of the one or the planning of the other.

***A Pound of Stabilization, Please!*** The OPA psychology was wonderfully expressed by Federal Price Administrator Paul Porter, who, at the height of the meat famine, told the public that "obtaining steaks next week or the week thereafter was less important than achieving stabilization for the entire economy." The curiously metaphysical character of the bureaucratic mentality appears here: instead of a policy (stabilization) being conceived of as instrumental to materialistic gains (steaks), the latter are sacrificed to the former. Let directives be carried out, though the heavens fall!

A week later, Harold N. Cohen, OPA regional enforcement executive for the New York area, put his chief's principle into practice. A local steel manufacturer—with that gumption and ingenuity which used to be one of the most appealing traits of the American character—had bought a herd of steers direct from a Texas ranch. He proposed to slaughter these in his own plant and to make a free gift of the meat to his employees. But Mr. Cohen forbade the feast as "creating a pattern that would destroy the historic and normal distribution of meat." That the historic and normal distribution of meat—or any distribution at all, for that matter—had been ended some time earlier was a fact-of-life without standing in bureaucratic metaphysics. "The idea, according to Mr. Cohen, who talked with officials in Washington before making his statement, is that the small amount of meat available can be spread around most equitably if distribution is confined to traditional trade channels." Another metaphysically improper fact-of-life was that the traditional trade channels were at the moment refusing to distribute any meat at all in order to destroy the OPA regulations which Messrs. Porter and Cohen were enforcing.

In some ways, Senator Taft is a great thinker.

***Well Done, Thou etc.*** In "The Story of Cyprus" (August), I paid a tribute to the liblab statesman, Arthur Creech-Jones, who evolved in less than a year from an impassioned tribune of the Cypriots into an apologist for their British rulers; the difference being, of course, that in 1945 he was in opposition and in 1946 in power, as Under-Secretary of Colonies in the Labor government. Mr. Creech-Jones' admirers will be pleased to know that his loyal service was rewarded, in last month's cabinet reorganization, with advancement to post of Secretary of State for the Colonies. Well done, thou good and faithful servant!

Nor did Mr. Creech-Jones forget his old friends after his promotion. He has announced that "constitutional reforms aimed at establishing a more liberal and progressive regime in the internal affairs of Cyprus are under consideration." Specifically, he proposes the eventual re-establishment of a central legislature; i.e., the restoration of the impotent, window-dressing Legislative Council which Gladstone gave the Cypriots in 1882 and which was abolished after the 1931 rebellion. If they hump themselves, the Laborites may be able to bring the march of progress in Cyprus up to the point it had reached in 1882.

A Reuters dispatch from Nicosia dated October 23 suggests that these Greeks look with a fishy eye on the British bearing gifts: "The British plan was rejected 'categorically and with indignation' tonight by the Ethnarchic (Church of Cyprus) Council. It opposed 'any solution of the Cyprus question not granting national liberty by union with Greece, which constitutes our only national claim and aspiration'."

***The Bomb—Afterthoughts*** The progressives' favorite apology for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was that it shortened the war and thus saved lives. This kind of reasoning, of course, can be used to justify almost any atrocity. But it is beginning to appear, in addition, that Japan was beaten *before* the atomic bombings, and that her rulers knew this and were frantically trying to make peace. Two recent statements by high U. S. military figures are interesting in this connection:

Admiral Halsey, not precisely a humanitarian, said: "The first atomic bomb was an unnecessary experiment. It was a mistake ever to drop it. Why disclose a weapon like that to the world when it wasn't necessary? The scientists had this toy and they wanted to try it out, so they dropped it. It killed a lot of Japs, but the Japs had put out peace feelers through Russia long before." (AP dispatch, Sept. 9)

And Admiral Blandy, who was in charge of the Bikini tests, said that a "virile nation" would endure a lot of atomic bombing even after its main cities were destroyed. "I cannot believe that it would surrender while its fighting forces were intact—its armies, fleets, its bombs, its launching platforms. Japan lost her means of resistance before the atomic bomb was dropped."

*THE HEAVY THINKERS ON GOERING'S SUICIDE*

General H. H. Arnold: "I expected something like that to happen. The average German does not want to be hung."

The editors of PM: "When we heard of Goering's suicide, there was a certain tenderness in all our hearts for Col. C. B. Andrus. We sensed what he must be feeling over the premature death of his main charge."

The Nuremburg Nestor: "WASHINGTON, Oct. 16—By his suicide, Hermann Goering lost any chance to become a German martyr, Justice Robert H. Jackson, who prosecuted the No. 2 Nazi in Nuremburg, said today. Goering, through his self-inflicted death by poison instead of dying courageously on the gallows, dispelled the 'myth of Nazi bravery and stoicism and deep conviction', the Supreme Court Justice added. (Add news report, same paper, same date: "First soundings of German public opinion showed that Goering's judgement in choosing such a psychological moment for suicide . . . was having the effect he might well have desired. All other aspects of the trial and executions were completely overshadowed as thousands of Germans chuckled over the trick he had played on the occupying powers, and once more thought of him as a hero. Goering's dramatic gesture in death appeared to have helped these Germans forget his crimes.")

*HUMANITARIANISM ON THE BORDER*

British forces have destroyed nearly a dozen villages in the Northwestern Frontier Province of India as punishment for the recent abduction by tribesmen of a British political agent . . . The agent was released, but the British, who said certain unspecified demands had not been met, sent planes and artillery to attack the villages.

The intent of the British, it was said, was to destroy the villages of the tribesmen—whose building materials are extremely scarce—"to keep them busy and out of mischief for the next few months." (In London, the India Office said "this is the most humane way of teaching them, since an expedition would mean unnecessary loss of life.") Notice is given before an attack, it is said, but two or three deaths have been reported because of "the mistake of a pilot who bombed the wrong village." Compensation has been paid and apologies have been made for the deaths, it was explained. —N. Y. Herald Tribune, Sept. 12.

*LOCAL BOY MAKES GOOD*

On July 24, Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E., made his last official appearance at meetings of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress . . . Sir Walter (who on the following day took his seat in the House of Peers as Baron Citrine of Wembley) had been General Secretary of the T.U.C. since 1926.

—proud report in Labour, organ of the T.U.C., for August.

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# Anti-Capitalist "Revolution" in France

## by Gelo and Andrea

THROUGHOUT Europe, wartime Planned Economy is changing into postwar Planned Economy. The trend is pronounced in England, in France, in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. The new Planned Economies now coming into being are distinguished from their wartime predecessors by the fact that nationalization—almost always accompanied by expropriation of private capital—plays a major role.

These nationalizations are, of course, not the result of revolutionary mass action aiming at radical social change. On the other hand, neither are they mere technical measures inherent in any Statist economic controls, comparable to such measures as the creation of central planning boards. The war economies of both the Nazis and the democratic-capitalist powers have shown that the State can efficiently direct the economy without resorting to nationalizations.

But why then are nationalizations a part of the post-war Controlled Economy? And, since they are neither means of social liberation nor measures which would leave intact the fundamental structure of capitalist society, what is their significance?

We shall limit ourselves to the study of France, the country in which we live. Only after similar studies on other European countries have been undertaken will it be possible to ascertain whether our conclusions are generally valid.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The dominant political forces in France—De Gaulle and the MRP, the Communists, and the Socialists—follow policies which must lead to failure if they are not backed by powerful industrial and military forces. None of these parties intends to step out of the general framework of a world dominated by national rivalries. Therefore they must orient all energies toward the building of a national power-reserve and to this effect they must work toward a Planned Economy in tune with this goal. Each one of them, however, wishes that the power reserve thus created be put at the service of its particular interests. For the Gaullists this means that France should become one of the Big Powers; for the Communists, that France be a bridgehead of Russia in Western Europe; for the Socialists, that the independence of France from the Big Powers be maintained within the framework of an alliance with other nations (European Federation).

The history of the Third Republic has taught the Communist and Socialist leaders that a government of the Left, resulting from an electoral victory, is condemned to powerlessness as long as the real levers of power in the State—and, *a fortiori*, in the economy—remain in the hands of the representatives of classes that will always remain their irreconcilable enemies. But the conclusion that the old apparatus of domination and its social basis must be abolished by revolutionary mass action, can never be drawn by the CP or the SP. While it is true that a victorious revolutionary mass action would radically eliminate the rule of the formerly dominating classes, it is equally true that it would prevent for a long time, if not for ever, the building of an economy oriented toward power policies. Such action would also sweep away those "working-class organizations"* whose existence is incompatible with the spontaneity of the masses. Therefore these degenerated working-class parties cannot and will not take the revolutionary road to power and are forced, despite the teachings of history, to choose the parliamentary road. They try to climb to power through electoral victories and parliamentary majorities, but hope at the same time to conquer, also by parliamentary means, the real commanding heights of the State and of the economy.

Such task would be impossible if the bourgeoisie were still strong, be it only as strong as it was in 1936. Even at that time, the levers of power could have been wrested from it by revolutionary and direct mass action. But the French bourgeoisie today is only a shadow of its former self; it no longer has the power to impose upon society its way of thinking and acting. The root of this impotence lies in its inability to insure any longer by its own forces the functioning of the economy. Its general weakness is emphasized by the fact that a considerable part of the bourgeoisie and of the high state bureaucracy is compromised by the Vichy adventure and that the bourgeois political parties were in complete decomposition immediately after the liberation.

Under these circumstances the Gaullists were much better placed to lead the fight against the working-class parties, because they were the incarnation of nationalism and the protagonists of a society in which capital would no longer use the State for its own ends, but where the State, in the name of the "general interest," would dominate the whole of society. But the MRP cannot and does not wish to use violence. It is not able to because it is too weak, and does not want to because it wishes to insure social peace in the interest of a rapid development of the power-political potential. The Gaullists hope that a series of circumstances—the rivalries between the SP and the CP; the CP policy which does not want to compromise the building of a power potential by social upheaval; the decision of the Anglo-Saxon powers not to tolerate a "bolshevik" France—will prevent the total and irrevocable coming to power of the working-class parties and especially of the CP. They hope that these parties will be weakened eventually and will lose their social basis because their policies can only mean new sacrifices for the masses. For all these reasons the Gaullists have been led to conduct the struggle against the working-class parties on the parliamentary plane and have been forced to adopt policies involving concessions on their part.

### THE "LEFT" BIDS FOR POWER

Given these conditions, it is not impossible that the working-class parties will move into control of the economy and of the new State apparatus. (As an indication of the growth of the State apparatus let us just quote the figures for the Ministry of the Interior alone: this ministry now employs 96,000 civil servants as against 14,160 in 1938). The legal way to power is marked by structural reforms through parliamentary

* We refer to the SP and the CP as "working-class organizations" although they really are no such thing. But there is no other terminology in common use.

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majority. Apart from a gradual transformation of the State apparatus itself which does not concern us here, nationalizations are the essential instruments to be utilized.

The expropriation of banks and key industries would deprive the bourgeoisie of positions which, though they no longer allow it to dominate the State, still enable it to sabotage a government of which it does not approve and to support the domestic and foreign enemies of the working-class parties. Therefore nationalizations, especially for the CP, should make it possible that the coup d'état, i.e., the culmination of the legal road to power, will not unleash profound social upheaval and civil war but will rather be the liquidation of a feeble adversary whose base already is sapped. In other words, the nationalizations should allow the coup d'état to take place under conditions similar to those in Germany when the Nazis took power in 1933. (Note in passing that Communist policies require the coup d'état not to take place before the power of France is strong enough to allow a defense against Anglo-Saxon intervention.)

It is evident that the nationalizations can play the role assigned to them by the working-class parties only if (1) they comprise the banking system and key industries and (2) the decisive positions fall to these parties and not to their enemies—in short, only if the nationalizations correspond to the definition given in the CP and SP joint manifesto of May 2, 1945: (1) removal of the enterprise from ownership by private capital (with compensation except for traitors); (2) removal of private capital from managerial posts; (3) participation of workers' delegates—i.e., men from the CP and SP unions, especially the former—in management.

DeGaulle and the MRP, though they have accepted nationalization for the reasons explained above, try to protect big business interests as much as possible and to put businessmen into the key posts. They aim to create executive organs for the defense of "national grandeur" rather than of capitalism. The big fight, therefore, has been over the relative size of the scope of nationalization and the form of administration; the rate of compensation has been a secondary issue.

## NATIONALIZATION TO DATE

Since all the nationalizations so far have been the result of parliamentary majority decisions, they are compromises which show the changing power-balance between the three great parties.

The CP-SP program called for the nationalization of the banks, the insurance companies, key industries, and part of the communications system. Up to now the following have been nationalized—in addition to certain automobile and aircraft factories: the coal mines in the Northern Departments and the Pas de Calais, by a decree of December 13, 1944, promulgated by the First Provisional Government (under the Presidency and uncontested authority of General de Gaulle); the Banque de France and the four large banks of deposit, by the law of December 2, 1945 of the First Parliamentary Government of the Fourth Republic (under the Presidency of de Gaulle but in which his influence was smaller); and finally gas and electricity, insurance companies and all coal mines (under the Gouin government in which the working-class parties enjoyed predominance for the first time).

One can get a picture of the working-class parties' idea of nationalization if one considers the measures taken during the first days after the liberation in regions that were as yet without contact with the central government. These measures concerned a considerable number of small and medium-size enterprises as well as some large ones, among them the Berliet automobile factory in Lyon which employs 5000 workers. In all these cases, the reason advanced for the elimination of the capitalist owners or their representatives was: collaboration with the enemy. The owners, either in flight or arrested, were not replaced by other representatives of private capital nor by high civil servants, but by new men who had come up in the Resistance and owed their ascendance to the CP or to the union bureaucracy which almost in all cases was made up from the ranks of the CP. The new administration was organized in forms unknown under capitalism. The reorganization of the enterprise was decided at negotiations between, on the one hand, working-class organizations (which, during that period, practically meant the CP since the SP had only little importance) and, on the other, representatives of de Gaulle, i.e., of the still disorganized State of the Fourth Republic. The Communists had a distinct advantage during these negotiations and the factories fell into their hands through the intermediary of the Communist-dominated unions, and this although the union delegates had only a consultative voice in the board of managers.

The situation was quite different in places where the Communists had to deal with an already consolidated state apparatus and where the relations of power were favorable to the Gaullists. This was the case, e.g., for the largest French automobile factory, the Renault works in Paris (35,000 workers before the war, 25,000 workers now). Although union delegates are members of the board of management and thus have the right to vote, they remain a minority without any real influence on decisions. In the tripartite board of management in which the members as well as the director of the factory are nominated by the government, the State representatives are the decisive element. Since they were nominated by a de Gaulle government, they do not represent working-class organizations. This shows why it is so very important for those who carry out the policy of nationalizations to have the government in their hands.

The Gaullists defended their point of view most successfully during the nationalizations of the coal mines in the North and the Pas de Calais. The union delegates remained completely outside of the boards of management. They only became members of the consultative committees, whereas the old managers nearly always retained their positions though they now depended on the State instead of on private capital. In no case were they replaced by new men. They furthermore kept their functions in the boards of management of non-nationalized large enterprises. Here, from the point of view of the Gaullists, management was in dependable hands. (The expropriation measures furthermore remained incomplete, but this is not the place to go into too much detail.)

In accordance with their increased importance in the 2nd de Gaulle government, the working-class parties succeeded in wresting more important concessions from the Gaullists during the nationalization of the banks. It is true that in this case also the former presidents and general directors remained in their posts and continued to participate in the management of banks and other non-nationalized big enterprises. But a complete expropriation was decreed and the union delegates became members of the boards of management with full rights

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including the right to vote. Since they form only a feeble minority (4 among 12), they cannot effectively influence management. They nevertheless fulfill the important role of holding advanced positions for the working-class organizations until the day when the representatives of the government in the board should also become the mandataries of working-class organizations.

At the date of writing (April, 1946), it is not yet possible to foretell how radical will be the impact of the nationalizations carried out by the Gouin government. In any case its measures will be more radical than all the preceding ones. But it should be noted on the other hand that the Gouin government up to now has not changed anything in the administration of previously nationalized enterprises. When the Communist minister of industrial production, Marcel Paul, attempted to introduce in the Northern coal mines certain changes favorable to the working-class organizations, calling in Communists to replace certain de Gaulle appointees, the united attack of the SP and the MRP forced the CP to beat the retreat. Of course, it is not a desire to protect the interests of big capital which made the SP oppose an increased participation of working-class organizations in management. It wished only to avoid any reinforcement of the Communists' position. Without any doubt, the rivalry between the CP and the SP has hampered the action of the Gouin government and made for the fact that until the middle of April the nationalizations were limited to gas and electricity only. On the other hand, both parties definitely want nationalizations to be continued and this is why they voted together against the representatives of the other parties to prolong the parliamentary session in order that parliament could decide the nationalization of insurance, of the remaining coal mines and of the private banks. (The question of the banks in the end remained in suspense).

## THE MASSES MUST BE WON OVER

It is obvious that the working-class organizations can only carry on their policies if they do not lose the support of the masses. The CP, the SP and the CGT (General Confederation of Labor) became powerful organizations in the months after liberation. But the masses followed the Communist and Socialist leaders only because they saw in them the spokesmen of a policy which, after so much misery and suffering, would finally bring the good life and freedom from the regimentation and coercion that had marked the preceding years. There existed an unresolvable contradiction between what the masses expected and what the policies of the parties could offer them. For the leadership, everything depended on their ability to conceal these contradictions.

But how can the parties succeed in convincing the masses that the measures decided upon by the Planned Economy will eventually serve the interests of the workers when these measures impose ever new sacrifices upon them; and this in spite of their increased efforts, in spite of a perceptible increase in economic activity, and in spite of the liberation of the country from an invader who had preempted a considerable part of the national product? And how can they convince the masses that they still defend working-class interests, although they reject all strikes, decree a freezing of wages despite the continued increase in prices, demand an extreme acceleration of the rhythm of work and oppose the traditional class-struggle policies?

Already during their underground period Socialist and Communist leaders realized the difficulties which their policies would encounter among the masses, but hoped to surmount them by utilizing the fact that their policies would be directed against capital. Wasn't there an old traditional idea firmly rooted in the minds of the workers that any action against capital would *ipso facto* be one in the interest of the workers? Though at the service of policies which are opposed to the daily and historical interests of the workers, the nationalizations are a means to tie the masses to the policies of these parties under the pretext of anti-capitalism. The parties proclaim that the nationalizations are "transitional measures which will allow society to move boldly toward the Socialist revolution with the help of a progressive regime."

The idea of nationalization plays a primary role in the propaganda for the "Battle of Production" and for the electoral campaign. Benoit-Franchon, general secretary of the CGT and its real leader, told striking miners in Lens last autumn: "Since the coal mines are now nationalized and since you work no longer for the trusts but for the nation, it is not only your duty but also your own interest not to tolerate strikes and to increase production as much as possible." And in all his pre-election speeches the then minister of finance André Philip explained to the masses: "The measures which we have taken certainly are not popular, the tasks assigned to you are heavy, but you no longer work for the dynasty of mine owners and for the lords of banking and insurance but for yourself, i.e., for the whole nation." High-placed Socialist civil servants expressed it more simply and more cynically during a small meeting which we attended: "The nationalizations make many things much more easily acceptable."

## THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The Vichy version of a Planned Economy left the elements of capitalist society—bourgeoisie and proletariat—untouched. The nationalizations of the Fourth Republic, however, transform one section of the bourgeoisie from independent capitalists into rentiers and another one from holders of independent managerial positions to state employees. On the other hand, that part of the bureaucracy of the Planned Economy which owes its ascendance to the working-class parties and to the nationalizations (union delegates in managing boards, Socialist and Communist representatives in the various planning and control boards, etc.) forms a new privileged layer with quite novel social features very different from those shown by the Vichy bureaucracy. It does not have any connection with capital either directly or indirectly and is linked solely to the working-class parties. It therefore has quite a different ideology. "The party" is to those men the inviolable authority and its policy is supreme law. They form that part of society which displays genuine enthusiasm for the new power policy, for structural reforms and especially for nationalizations. From the minister to union delegates in factory committees, all readily submit to the policy of the parties and rapidly become alienated from the mass of the workers. They enjoy considerable economic and social privileges and demand from the workers a strict discipline and maximum production "to the limit of one's strength," according to Croizat, Communist union leader and minister of labor in the Gouin government.

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Thus a new possibility presents itself for thousands and tens of thousands of workers and lower middle-class elements: climbing the social ladder through mere obedience to political and union leaders, while the working masses remain exploited and oppressed. This in turn makes for a tendency toward decomposition and disintegration of the working class.

The social condition of this class does not remain unchanged either. The controlled economy oriented toward power politics does not know of crises of overproduction with resulting unemployment, but only of the crisis of eternal want. The needs not only for raw materials and industrial installations but also for manpower are never satisfied. Unemployment disappears to make place for overwork and forced work. Furthermore: whereas the worker is for the capitalist an object of exploitation only, he is for the masters of the new economy—because maximum efficiency on the national plane and not private profit is the motor—a means of production that must be treated gently. Nursery schools and a special service for the protection of motherhood are set up to allow women to work in factories while serving the demands for increase of human material.

Man is considered a part of a machine which is supposed to yield maximum efficiency. This makes for a social security policy on a much larger scale than under private capitalism where man is a raw material abundantly available. This society of the "general interest" oriented toward the building of a power potential, which does not recognize the desire for happiness of the masses but rather perpetuates their misery, tends at the same time to assure them, though at a very low level, a social security which did not exist in the capitalist economy oriented toward profit. Yet it must be well understood that this society takes such measures only in order to better defend its interests of power which exclude forever happiness, liberty, culture, and must inevitably lead to war.

Though this social transformation is as yet still at its very beginning, it is already possible to form an idea on what it will mean for the worker in the factory. The reorganization of management that took place during the days of liberation at the Berliet plant, for instance, was not based on any mass action. And in the later period no trace of democracy was permitted in the factory. The leading personnel, including the union delegates, owe their ascendance to the CP and the unions. They are in no sense delegates of the workers since they are neither elected nor controlled by them. In the only place where the workers can raise their voice—in the general assemblies of the factories—one discusses only such matters as price calculations, an improvement of professional knowledge, etc. The workers have no right to talk about wages. They are consulted only on the best means to further increase total production and individual productivity. The factory paper *Contact*, edited by Stalinists, publishes pictures and names of those who "win our victories in the battle of production," i.e., of those who work overtime, on holidays, etc. The paper is full of admiration for the Stakhanovite methods of work competition. Workers who are deemed to be insufficiently productive are exposed and denounced as "saboteurs" and "fifth columnists." The workers are asked to eliminate those who "hamper the rhythm of work" or who "simulate sickness, which accounts for a loss of almost 4 million francs for the enterprise." This factory, on the other hand, has nurseries, vegetable gardens and dairy farms for its workers, organizes the distribution of toys for the workers' children, etc. This is supposed to make up for wages too low to allow the workers to eat or be dressed properly, and to quiet their revolt against their conditions.

This kind of society, if it matures, could not be considered a progressive stage on the road to socialism even if capitalism should be completely liquidated. It would on the contrary be a new obstacle since it would replace a capitalism already impotent and dying by a society which—its police and terror apparatus once fully developed—could maintain itself for a long time.

## PERSPECTIVES

Power politics and a Planned Economy to implement them are indissolubly linked in post war France. The complete realization of the nationalization program of the working-class parties would make these parties the master of this economy, since it is dominated by those who dispose of the credit machinery and the key industries. The nationalizations realized so far are as yet incomplete from every point of view and can certainly not yet give power to the working-class parties. As long as their enemies maintain leading positions in the nationalized sector as well as in the economic and state apparatus, it is still possible to interrupt the evolution toward a controlled economy of power dominated by the working-class parties—and in the last analysis by the CP—and to replace it either by a real movement of social and economic liberation or by a Planned Economy oriented toward power under the influence of political forces which would liquidate the degenerated working-class parties as well as all truly revolutionary organizations. Finally there still is the possibility that the rivalry of the parties reduces France to a zone of influence of the great Western powers. The only solution which is completely excluded is the restoration of the autonomous power of capital.

Renewal of the working-class movement against bourgeois reaction, against fascism and against all the old parties, based on a new understanding of the objective development, or destruction of all social and individual liberties for a whole historical epoch: that is the alternative at this turning point of the history not only of France but of Europe and of the world.

*FORESIGHT IN MEDIA, PA.*

It's about time that Media had some sort of war memorial for its World War II veterans . . . How about a combined meeting of all the civic, service, veteran and business organizations in the town to map out a memorial program? Danger in postponement is that another war might be on us before the memorial for the other one has been decided and placed.

—Editorial in the Media Weekly Comment, Sept. 5.

*FOOTNOTE ON CYPRUS*

Mr. Turton asked the Colonial Secretary how many Jews are at present resident in Cyprus; and what steps he is taking to encourage the immigration of Jews into this colony.

Mr. George Hall: The number of Jews now residing in Cyprus is 107. The conditions of Cyprus offer no opportunity for large-scale immigration of any kind.

—Proceedings, House of Commons, May 15.

*NO JOKERS*

The foreign policy statement was passed unanimously. Neither pro nor anti-Soviet blocs formed during the discussion . . . There were no jokers in the foreign-policy report the committee presented. It went down the line for the kind of genuinely American policy demanded by Henry Wallace.

—from a report on the Chicago conference of the CIO-PAC; in The New Republic, Oct. 7.

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# Conscientious Objection Is Bankrupt

"WAR," says the Conscientious Objector, "is un-Christian, inhumane, immoral, economically and politically destructive, brings socially objectionable results, etc. There must be no more war."

And so say the vast majority of the world's people—and they have been saying it at least since the experience of World War I. Which leaves the C.O. with only one distinction. When war comes he resolutely folds his arms while the majority sadly set about to engage in it as they may be ordered.

Neither response is a very worthy one (though either may be necessary for the individual's self respect) and *neither can prevent occurrence of war*. It is at this point that I assert conscientious objection is bankrupt, and to attempt to build upon an organization of C.O.'s or upon the significant aspect of conscientious objection (the refusal to cooperate in waging war) is to invite failure. Telling people war is wrong or terrible is to be trite to a painful extreme. To tell them not to cooperate in it, is to give them an impossible alternative. (Two-thirds of the Jews of Europe were liquidated by the German government. Contemporary history shows that literally millions of non-cooperators can be done away with if necessary.)

It is to the credit of most men who are C.O.s that they realize that mere resolute folding of arms will never prevent recurrence of war. These men have positive programs to offer, but in offering them they break free of the term "C.O." and become something else: religionists, humanitarians, moralists, socialists, single-tax men, co-op men, educators, psychologists, philosophers, etc. They no longer have the common agreement that makes the use of a general term such as "C.O." meaningful.

Why this breaking apart; this lack of agreement on a program to prevent the recurrence of war? The disagreement comes at a fundamental point. As soon as the question is asked—"What is the cause of war?"—there is disagreement. To admit there are many diverse causes only means that each man picks what he considers the most important cause or causes. There cannot be agreement on a program when there is no agreement on cause.

The question must be met. Let us attempt an answer by asking: "What conditions *must* be present in order for war to occur? (Usually when the causes of war are discussed, people discuss what conditions *are* present.) There seems to be three primary conditions necessary, *the elimination of any one of which would make war* (war being a struggle implemented by the use of armed forces between independently governed communities) *impossible*. They are: 1. People must support the war effort of their community (that is, at least "go along"). 2. Armed forces must be obtainable. 3. There must be at least two independently governed communities. (Economic conditions, often thought a basic cause, are a major irritant but not a "must" for war. Wars can occur though the economic situation be ideal.)

1. *People must support the war effort of their community.* "If everyone were a C.O. there would be no war." This has been the idea back of most peace education in the past. The emphasis has been to show: (a) that war is what the C.O. says it is (see above), (b) that the people on the other side of the fence are really very much like us and not the beasts they were made out to be, (c) that the "big boys" (diplomats, munition makers, capitalists, etc.) start war; that the average man has much to lose and nothing to gain by war. These ideas were prevalent and widely accepted between wars yet they did not prevent another one. Why? (a) Horrible as war is, it seems the only alternative to people who have gotten into an impossible situation (such as when the German armies are on the border and ready to strike or when the Japanese have blown up the chief naval base.) (b) Once maneuvered into a position of fighting, it doesn't seem significant what kind of person the opponent *really* is. You are only concerned with the behavior he exhibits toward you, and that behavior is hostile. (c) When war comes, "Who started it?" seems secondary to "Who'll finish it?" ("What if the U. S. government did provoke the Japs to attack? Nothing to do now but see it through.") Despite their words of peace, the people marched when the order was given. Peace education failed when people were suddenly confronted with the immediacy of war. It will fail again when they find themselves in such a situation.

But can we avoid crisis situations by getting people to take an interest in their state departments and see that it is run in agreement with their desires for peace? Are the American people doing that today? Have they ever done anything approaching it? Are the Russian people in a position to do more? Such hopes and sentimentality in the present world will lead us down a one way street to disaster.

2. *Armed forces must be obtainable.* This has been one of the reasons "disarmament" and outlaw of the atomic-bomb have been proposed. "Disarmament" has been tried and it failed to prevent war. Why? Because it was not enforceable and not *total*. Partial disarmament, if it were enforceable (which it is not under present conditions) might greatly diminish the effects of war, but it cannot prevent it. Total disarmament is impossible. As long as a rock or a club is available, armed forces are obtainable.

3. *There must be at least two independently governed communities.* If all people were somehow perfectly adjusted psychologically, or somehow were all Christ-like, there would be no war. If there were no guns or clubs or rocks available, there would be no war (though we might see some vigorous wrestling matches). But if people are just typical 1946 folk with clubs and atom-bombs at their disposal, only one thing seems to reasonably guarantee that there will be no war. That is the thing that keeps California and Arizona, Armenia and Azerbajan, or Normandy and Brittany, at peace with each other; a common law, drawn up by a common legislator, put in effect by a common executor, and applied and judged by a common court.

Rome experienced 200 years without war by destroying all governments independent of her that were within her reach. She truly ruled all her world. Today our reach is vastly extended so that our world of 1946 covers the entire globe. Destroying all opposition to bring about *Pax Americana* does not seem as facetious now as it did a year ago. It is a possibility (just as is a *Pax Russiana*), though, since we are looking for a way that avoids further war, not one open to us.

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To form such a common law with accompanying institutions by means of a federation of present nation-states is another matter. It is to this that those concerned with the prevention of another war should give attention.

Is world federal government possible in the next few years? That is a question we must face, and one we must answer. If your reply is in the negative, don't bother to apologize for your cheerless discovery;—just start looking for a good, deep cave. The U. S. Army has already begun looking for some.

DON ELTON SMITH

# COMMONNONSENSE

SOMEBODY fools somebody, that I knew, it is always a sound assumption to make, but who fools everybody? That has always been a mystery to me. The State? And who is the State? If by State we mean those who run it, keep it going or *from* going, as you prefer, then again, we find people who ponder painfully on their lies all day, because they know that they must fool somebody, that's the rule. But they are victims too, they suffer from it before they make others suffer. If you say: Not these people as such, but IT, the State, then I still don't know who fools everybody, because the State does not exist outside of those poor devils there. Suppose we said one day: This morning nobody who is not himself the State will go to any office. Well, the President would certainly not go. Nor would anyone else. All offices would remain empty. That would give you by exclusion the definition of the State: Nothing, Nobody, the Full Void. You may then come back at me with the old story that no one in particular, but the union of all of them is the State, and I shall say: What union? Simply a multiplicity of them? Ten busfuls? Twenty officefuls? What makes them the State? What lifts them from the scattered existence of nobodies to the synthesis of State? Because, as individuals, you must grant that they are the real synthesis of nothing multiplied by nothing. Think only of the deception: They all write but are not writers. They all think but are not thinkers. They all deal with Dramatis Personae but are not playwrights or actors. They are all specialists in you (in fact, you may not assert who you are unless they tell you), and yet they know nothing about you and don't care. And they are *all* the State. And with all this they still don't impress anybody. They are all afraid, weak, cowardly, and they all terrorize. So there must be something that confers upon them a new substance, there must be a chemical transformation, a chain reaction which unifies them all into the substance: State. But where is it?

SOME time ago I went to see my publisher and was very depressed: not only had I failed to make any progress in my work for him, but two stories of mine had been rejected the same day. To make things worse, one of the editors said to me: "We were just reading a book review by Lionel Trilling which contains a few strong words against you." "May I see it?" I asked, and he said: "Well, this does not seem to be the best day to show you anything of the kind, but as you know about it by now, here it is."

I was given the Autumn issue of "Kenyon Review" and shown the following: "*But if the progressive liberal of our day, or the radical, is inclined to see an interest in morals as a soft way of diverting our attention from the burning questions of politics, it can also happen that the person who becomes aware of the moral root of politics can be led to feel that politics is nothing but the corruption, through organization, of morality. The result of this can be, at least tiresome; certainly nothing could be more wearying than the bright childish eyes with which Niccolo Tucci regards the world in Dwight Macdonald's 'Politics.' I like a good deal about the new line of 'Politics' and I hope it continues, but whenever Mr. Tucci opens those wide eyes of his upon a world he never made and never was made by and tells us that those grown men in office are mendacious, corrupt and official, I begin to long for a portfolio.*"

As I read these lines, I was overcome by a deep emotion. "Is it possible?" I asked myself; "no, this can't be; I must not fall the victim to such illusions." But my emotion was so apparent, that the editor asked: "What has come over you? You look happy." "O yes" I said, "I *am* happy. Do you realize that these are almost the same words that one Callicles used against Socrates in the dialogue known as *Gorgias*? Callicles says "*I feel toward philosophers as I do toward those who lisp and imitate children . . . So when I see a man play like a child, his behaviour appears to me ridiculous and worthy of stripes. And I have the same feeling about students of philosophy.*" He then calls Socrates a defenseless child and says: "*What is the sense of an art which converts a man of sense into a fool?*" Then he says: "*Learn the philosophy of business and acquire the reputation of wisdom . . . emulate only the man of substance and honor who is well to do.*" Now Mr. Trilling does not give any such useful advice because he is not my friend, but the accusation is the same. And yet I know that I am not Socrates, and not even a beginner in philosophy: as a matter of fact, I discovered Plato only a few months ago. I must solve this riddle: please, let me see the whole article."

A few more words were sufficient to cure me of every delusion of grandeur: there was just the same distance between Socrates and myself, as between Callicle's cynicism and Lionel Trilling's interest in the affairs of the world. Callicles really and truly did not care; he believed that thinking was pernicious and said so without the slightest feeling of shame, while Mr. Trilling would be ashamed to talk that way: he believes that thinking is important and even speaks, I see here, of moral problems.

However, this was not enough to clear me of the charges. "What can I do?" I thought. "Can I say that Mr. Trilling reminds me of my father and the 'respectable' people of his generation, who used to call me a child whenever I questioned the wisdom of those in authority? That would be an insult: those people dreaded criticism: Mr. Trilling is a critic by profession. What else then? Can I retort that while I stare with bright eyes at a world I never made and never was made by, he did make the world and was made by it? That would be even worse: imagine, Mr. Trilling and the atomic bomb; Mr. Trilling and all the lies by which we live . . ." So I decided that the only other thing I could do was to patiently re-read all my past articles in POLITICS and see where and how far I had been such a baby.

And to my great surprise I found that he was right. There was nothing but childish astonishment in every one of them, and as I re-read them (it is my duty to confess this too) I realized that I have not grown up at all during these years; if anything, I have become more of a child, as now I am possessed by such despair that, instead of protesting, at times I feel more like crying in the face of the world, because I am frightened and I don't know WHO in this immense ruin around us can do anything at all.

"Now," I said, "I must acknowledge all this and thank Mr. Trilling for opening my eyes on my open eyes." But as I was getting ready to do this, my now doubly open eyes fell on a phrase that had escaped them when they had just been open once. Right after saying that my writings make him long for a portfolio, he says (speaking of the author whose book he is

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here reviewing): "*She can judge political error and chicanery for what they are and quite without sentimentalizing over the inescapable fact that politics does compromise the purity of the moral intention; she understands politics to be a field of freedom in which, as in all human experience, cordial and corrosive are found together, and her moral vision is the clearer in consequence.*"

This left me almost breathless. "Of course he was right in discarding all despair," I said to myself, "if he knew such wonderful things, but then why wasn't he more generous with me? Why not console me with the good news instead of sneering at my despair? Because I was not at fault, I REALLY did not know, and I am sure that neither do the people who are in politics know it, not one of them."

And now, Mr. Trilling, may I address you personally: You can't just tell us "en passant" that you know of such a field of freedom where a mixture of cordial and corrosive is so freely distributed for the asking, and not tell us where it is and how we can all get there so that our moral visions too, if not our lot, may become "the clearer in consequence."

One reason why I am still hesitant to call myself a child is that I was an adult once, just like yourself and perhaps even more, because I really was on the road that leads to the portfolio; still very far from it, that is true, but when and how I would have finally gotten there was a question pertaining only to my skills as a prostitute. And, just like you, I laughed at those who opened their bright eyes on a world they never made and never were made by, and if you don't believe it I can prove it to you. (Shadow of Mussolini! Who could ever have told me that my fascist certificates would again prove useful some day?) But, as I was saying, I can prove it to you because I was once in charge of "Cultural Relations" i.e., (fascist propaganda) in this country. And how did I justify it to myself? Exactly as you suggest: telling myself and others that politics is a field of freedom, and when you have said that, by God, there is little else you may add: you are free to imagine yourself free, you are free to invent good motives for your bosses, you are free to believe that you may "bore from within" while feeding from without; you are free to live in the Trojan Horse which is the biggest political apartment house in history; you are nothing but free, and so is your responsibility. And to those who asked simple, fundamental questions, I said: "Nothing is more tiresome than the bright childish eyes with which certain people look at politics as the corruption, through organization, of morality." In other words, I was using the arguments of the "idealist" Benedetto Croce who taught that the Spirit is Freedom, that politics has nothing to do with Ethics because the Statesman is above that; he must be a true Machiavellian and not bother with petty problems of right and wrong which are good enough for the strictly private individual, etc. And when I left the fascist government it was not because I realized all of a sudden that I was associated with Big Bad Men, but only with small, happily irresponsible children. From there of course the next error, a typically fascist error, was to believe that all honesty and maturity were to be found on the democratic side of the fence, and I worked for three years or so with the official Enemies of Fascism in Washington, D. C. And I soon realized that the great difference between Washington and Rome consisted in this: that in Washington they spoke english, and in Rome italian. For the only things those officials really dreaded were: criticism and maturity of mind. They believed themselves mature because they had stopped asking themselves the questions a child would ask. In that silence they either slept or read the papers or wrote memos, and believed that, thus filled, that silence would provide the answer: all the answers. When I saw this I left them too and decided that from that day on I would speak or write only from the level of my own, personal, inalienable perplexity and ignorance, and my conclusion is: If those who are now leading the world happily to its ruin and to whom you, Mr. Trilling, would speak of cordials and corrosives and of fields of freedom and maturity of mind, if those people are the adults, I would be less ashamed to be seen in a baby carriage on Fifth Avenue, sucking my left toe, than in an official car of the United Nations, carrying with me one of those portfolios you may learn to covet through my writings, but would be condemned to keep through yours, and really, Mr. Trilling, let me tell you as one who knows: I am quite sure that you could never do it.

NICCOLO TUCCI

# Maiden Flight

"THE Mohammedans don't drink," said Mrs. Cox, the production manager's wife, who belonged to the Book of the Month Club. "It's their religion. I remember in a book, it's because . . ."

"Yes, but it doesn't seem right on a solemn occasion like this," said Mrs. Brindle, wife of the president of the Atomic Corporation of America, gripping her highball glass. "It's like the Jews, always breaking things up because they won't eat bacon. It impedes progress."

Everyone else in the comfortably appointed cabin was clutching a highball glass. Mr. Brindle, graying, well-groomed and thoughtful, was standing with the French phone in one hand, but in the other he was faithfully clutching his glass. Mr. Cox decided to try out the men's room and took his glass with him. Lord Crownbottom the British ambassador did not clutch his glass like the Americans, breeding will tell, but he did hold it at least, and occasionally even brought it to his lips. Mrs. Brindle was flattered. "I say," his lordship was heard to murmur to Lady Crownbottom, "what do you suppose they put in these things?" The ambassador was cursed with a very carrying murmur. "Nothing but the best, my dear," Lady Crownbottom replied tactfully.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Korchak, representing labor, were not only clutching their glasses, they were enthusiastically drinking. "I only hope the baby will be all right," said Ruby Korchak. "Anyway," Joe replied, "it's better than that rot-gut in the Atomic City Tavern. I guess I'll have a snooze." There was a highball rest beside each chair, he set down his glass but continued to clutch it as he prepared to doze. Ruby hoped he wouldn't snore. She looked timidly around, embarrassed to be among all these bigwigs. "But it was real nice of them to take us along," she said to her sleeping husband. Mrs. Cox viewed them benevolently. "Just big children."

Mrs. Brindle leaned over toward Lord Crownbottom and

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said: "Andrew, that is, Mr. Brindle invented it, with the help of the scientific staff. It has barbarium in it. We find it a great help in the new high speed life." Lord Crownbottom turned away to conceal his misgivings. "Oh," Mrs. Brindle went on, "it's specially treated against chain reaction. It just helps attune the body to atomic living." Lord Crownbottom was relieved. Sandabad the Egyptian shuddered.

The French ambassador had declined the honor of the voyage with a headache and the headache had spread like wildfire through the embassy. The highest official available had been Maurice Bagnole, commercial attache, who affected American ways. He drank steadily and after the first few drinks began to propose toasts. When sober he spoke perfect English, but now he was a bit befuddled, besides he was representing France. " 'Ere's to ze atome . . . 'Ere's to la vitesse, ze speed, you know."

Ivan Maslo the Russian representative clutched and drank with the rest but remained at first sternly aloof. He was well-dressed and handsome and, said Mrs. Cox, "you'd take him for an American if you didn't know he was a Red."

The undersecretary representing the State Department was rather bored and would have liked to sleep but the Scientist who sat beside him wanted to talk. "This one is nothing," he said, "it hardly gives you an idea of what the new barbarium will do. A single circuit of the globe will take us all of five hours. We're working on one that will do ten thousand m.p.h. Do you know what that means? You can leave New York after an early breakfast, circle the globe twice, and be back again for lunch."

"That will be quite a feat," said the undersecretary.

A hostess slipped in silently and replenished the glasses. She was cool and curled and lithe and sympathetic and impersonal, for years an airline hostess. "My work is in the air," she liked to say. She had a sense of uneasiness when she set her feet on the ground, she felt that time on the ground made her grow old. She was working on an idea for dormitories in captive blimps, where the people of the air could stop over between trips.

There was a radio in the cabin but it was kept in reserve for the big ceremony. For future trips a juke-box and pinball machines would be installed; silence and inactivity had been considered more befitting the dignity of the maiden flight.

The cabin was made of an opaque plastic; but one had only to press a button for a space the size of a window to become transparent, and another button created a transparent spot in the floor. At first all the passengers had played with the windows, though hardly a minute after the take-off the speed had been so great that nothing recognizable could be seen. Now, at an altitude of 40,000 feet, nothing was visible but cloud formations.

Less than an hour out, the hostess came in and announced that they were over Paris. "Ah, Paris!" sighed the Frenchman. He lighted up his window and tried to look down. All he could see was a dense yellow haze. "That is indeed Paris," he said with a nostalgic look that sat strangely on his up-and-coming countenance. "I can recognize the atmosphere anywhere, even from the top. 'Rien de plus pur que l'air qu'on y respire.' Even in Racine's day the air of Paris was not good from the hygienic point of view. And the spiritual purity of the air lingers on despite the gasoline fumes. There is no place like it. Just to be in it, one is a different man."

Sandabad the Egyptian smiled gravely, but to everyone else in the cabin this outburst was profoundly shocking. Paris had been the capital of pre-atomic civilization, surely such a rhapsody was out of place here. M. Bagnole saw that he had been tactless and tried to make amends. "Paris is my childhood," he explained. "It is in a sense the childhood of our splendid civilization. One does not wish to be a child again, but . . ."

Mrs. Cox suddenly became sorry for the Frenchman.

"I suppose you'll have to go back when your term of office is over?"

"Perhaps," said Bagnole diplomatically. He had other irons in the fire.

The atom ship raced eastward, over the Carpathians, the Urals, Asia, the Pacific. The drinks passed down the hatch, the company was drawn together. The passengers began smiling as they passed one another on their way to the rest rooms. The Russian when informed that he was over his homeland did a Cossack dance and sang Ochi Chornie, but still he would not talk. Moscow's position had not been made clear. But he did produce a few tins of caviar from his briefcase and pass them around.

Only Sandabad the Egyptian remained aloof. He hadn't wanted to come on this trip. He disliked removing his feet from the ground. But Egypt between wars was a free nation, and Sandabad was its representative at the United Nations. He hadn't wanted that either, but for these small countries who knew they had nothing to say, the United Nations provided a polite way to get rid of dyspeptic politicians. Now and then the Egyptian representative would make a very idealistic speech, and the beauty of it was that part of his mind believed what he was saying. He was a stern-faced man in a fez. He kept his window transparent and looked solemnly down.

"I say, old sport," said Lord Crownbottom, grown rather convivial after a number of highballs. "What are you looking at?"

"I am hoping, sir, to get a glimpse of the earth."

"Come now," said his lordship. "We spend so much time in the stuffy old place. A few hours in the ether won't harm you."

"I like the earth," the Egyptian admitted. Suddenly he felt very lonely and thought even this Englishman was better than nobody to talk to. He smiled a little. "Do you know what I should like, sir? I should like to be sitting on a mud bank with my feet dangling in the Nile."

"You need a drink," said his lordship. "Praps one of these —er—atomizers would brace you . . ."

"Atomizers!" beamed Lady Crownbottom. "Why, that's capital."

"Those bluebloods are making fun of us," Mrs. Brindle whispered to Mrs. Cox.

"We Mohammedans do not drink," said Sandabad. He looked round at the company and instead of faces he saw clutching hands. His irritation was too great for the diplomat in him. "And if we did, sir, I believe we should not drink atomizers."

"I always said," Mrs. Brindle whispered loudly to her friend, "that we shouldn't have these darkies in our United Nations. They are a thousand years behind the times. In fact, I don't see why we need foreigners to begin with. They destroy the unity of the thing."

Despite the speed with which the atom ship had passed over Paris, it was a remarkable mechanism, capable of slowing

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down to a leisurely whish and flying very low. Completing its first circuit of the globe, the ship approached Atomic City, Ohio. The hostess came in to announce this fact, and all the passengers, even the unaccountable Egyptian, brightened. This was Sandabad's chance to glimpse the earth. The others relaxed their grips. This was Mecca. This was their starting point and this was their destination.

Atomic City, formerly called Pokeyville after James T. Pokey its founder, consisted of the huge gray atomic works; "executive row," which was not a row at all but a prim cluster of frame houses on a slight rise which the inhabitants liked to call a hill; and the old town with its Methodist church and brick bank. Beyond Main Street, the railroad tracks, and beyond the railroad tracks, the poor. The ship circled the city, the Coxes and Brindles waved, the Korchaks waved—over different sections of town. The streets were deserted. "Everybody's out at the ball park," said Ruby Korchak.

Slowly the ship moved away from the town, in a few moments it was circling the ball park. The stands were divided in three sections, for rich, poor and Negroes, even from the ship the massed black faces could be seen in the sun. A band imported from Hollywood was marching round the field, the ship's radio carried the strains of "It's a Long Long Trail A-winding" to the travelers. The cheers of the multitude were carried aloft. Then there were speeches. The mayor of Atomic City welcomed the ship and its distinguished passengers back to the home port. The president of the United States said a few words from Washington; the undersecretary and the British ambassador spoke from the ship. The Russian said he felt fine but had no comment. In conclusion Andrew Brindle, president of the Atomic Corporation of America, took the microphone.

"Fellow citizens of Pokeyville, I mean Atomic City," he said, calling forth uproarious homespun laughter in the stands, "and the world, I want to tell you it's great to be up here. In less than five hours we have circumnavigated the globe on our good-will voyage in an easterly direction. From this vantage point conditions in Europe and Asia seem to be improving. I saw no breadlines or food riots. The ship is a mighty comfortable place to be in, and this atomic highball . . . oh boy! I'll let you in on a little secret. I invented it myself. It has barbarium in it and this superatomic bracer will soon be on the market. In another five hours we shall have completed our second and, for today, last circuit of the globe, this time from north to south and around. At suppertime I shall report to you on South America, Canada and the Polar regions. Until then, so long folks."

The band burst into Auld Lang Syne, the atomic motors opened up, and the ship burst into invisibility. Mrs. Brindle wiped a tear from her eye. "A beautiful place," she sighed. "If only the whole world could be like it!" Joe Korchak was still asleep but Ruby Korchak thought the place was beautiful too, especially if someone would come and fix the sink.

Sandabad the Egyptian had been looking down disconsolately. This was the earth, but how unlike itself. The sight of Atomic City filled him with lonely foreboding. Perhaps the earth was an illusion.

"Alas, madame," he said. "I am afraid it soon will. The Nile, the Volga, the Ganges, will all have their Pokeyvilles . . ."

"You really think so?" Mrs. Brindle said. She was very pleased. These darkies sometimes had a sixth sense.

"Can't you see he's pulling your leg?" said Mrs. Cox. "He doesn't like Atomic City, he'd rather be back in his jungle."

"What? How dare he? Andrew, this darkie has insulted me."

"Madame," said Sandabad. "It is no matter since the earth is not the earth. It is no matter whether we live in Pokeyville or die. It is no matter whether I am a darkie or not. But at school they taught me precision. An Egyptian, madame, is not a darkie . . ."

"Andrew," cried Mrs. Brindle. "Andrew! I have been insulted."

Andrew Brindle was perhaps the soberest of the whole company. He had a fine capacity for liquor, besides he had been saving himself for his speech. "Lord," he said to Cox, "the old girl's been insulted again."

Cox's head was not so cool. "It's no laughing matter," he said. "I think we should teach this fellow a lesson."

"Yes, indeed," said the Egyptian. "What better way to christen the atom ship than to discipline a poor old-fashioned cosmopolitan?"

Brindle took another stiff drink and now, with the help of Sandabad's last remark, he was properly indignant.

"I say," said Lord Crownbottom. "The bounder has gone too far." He cast a mournful glance at his former subject. "And after all the effort we spent on you."

The Russian coughed and stood up: "I wish to make the Soviet position perfectly clear. We are opposed to all racial discrimination. We champion freedom and democracy for small nations. However, this man is an obscurantist, a defeatist, a reactionary and a cosmopolitan. It is our unalterable view that he must be disciplined." The case was open and shut, surely Moscow's views would coincide with his own.

"Right ho," said Lord Crownbottom peering into his glass. "I propose that we make this chap join us in a drink . . . an atomic drink."

"I've told you," said Sandabad wearily, "we Mohammedans do not . . ."

"There he goes again," said Mrs. Brindle. "Andrew, are you going to sit there and let this heathen insult us all over again?"

"Now see here," said Brindle as he approached Sandabad with a seething, bubbling highball. "Drink up like a man, be like the rest of us. You play fair with us, we play fair with you. Drink up, man, drink up!"

Cox stepped a little closer to the Egyptian. "Yes," he said, "Drink up!"

"It's a fine drink, old thing," murmured Lord Crownbottom. "It savors of space itself. Bottoms up!"

"Space itself," repeated Sandabad. "Well, gentlemen, I shall drink (may Allah forgive me), but I drink in protest, in protest, IN PROTEST." His voice rose to a shrill scream as he tilted his head and emptied the glass in one great gulp. His face was purple as he set the glass on his highball rest, and his audience fell strangely silent. Suddenly an ominous gurgle was heard. The drink in Cox's glass churned wildly. Sandabad began to scream: "It's the reaction, my good friends. My spirit rebelled and set up the reaction. It was my spirit, my . . ."

But his voice was lost in the momentous explosion that followed. The atom ship split, fell, melted. No one had time to think.

RALPH MANHEIM

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# Picketing and the Law

> State of New Jersey. By virtue of Sections 2:152-4 to 2:152-7 of the title Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice of the Revised Statutes, I am directed to charge and command all persons being here assembled immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business, upon pain and penalties contained in said Sections 2:152-4 to 2:152-7. God save the State.

When, some months ago, the members of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America striking at the Westinghouse plant were thus addressed, they might well have commented as they dispersed themselves on the curious manner in which they were ordered to scram. These archaic-sounding phrases, fitting so ill in the mouth of a contemporary American peace officer, were not merely an acute case of legalese; the phrases so formed have a certain history behind them.

## 1.

When the House of Hanover, in the person of George I, was transported over the Channel to rule Britain, it was not met by a welcoming populace. The new king could hardly speak English (the pronunciation of either as aither, now standard in Britain, dates from his confusion); and more important, he came from a country that retained intact a good many of the feudal prerogatives to one that had killed one king and deposed another. The people, irked by new decrees, stirred in their gin-soaked misery and, again and again, attacked the officers sent to enforce them. In 1714 (more than fifty years before the American colonies revolted against his great-grandson), George I had the Riot Act passed: "Whereas of late many rebellious riots and tumults have been in divers parts of this kingdom . . ." The specific purpose of the act was, by the mere recitation of a formula, to change a riot from a misdemeanor, which it was already by common law, to a crime, punishable by death. "The statute, it is obvious, in an indirect kind of way established a kind of martial law against mere rioters, after a kind of proclamation of war against them."[1]

Except for the substitution of "God save the State" for "God save the King" and a few other minor emendations, this same proclamation of war was the one the UE strikers heard. If one hour after the reading, "to the number of twelve or more, being armed with clubs, guns, swords, or other weapons, or . . . to the number of thirty or more," the strikers "shall unlawfully, routously, riotously, and tumultuously continue together,"[2] they would be guilty—true, no longer of a felony, but of a misdemeanor. A misdemeanor is not punishable by death, but neither is it a negligible offense. In the State of New Jersey, it is punishable by a fine not exceeding $1000, or imprisonment, with or without hard labor as the court may direct, for a term not exceeding three years, or both.[3] If the defendant had in his possession any weapon, whether a pistol or a pair of brass knuckles, an additional punishment of five years is authorized.[4] For a second offense, he may be imprisoned for not more than double the time plus any time commuted from the first sentence.[5]

Perhaps of even greater potential danger is the carte blanche given peace officers in quelling a riot. If any of the rioters "shall be killed, hurt, or wounded by reason of their resisting the persons so dispersing, seizing or arresting them, or endeavoring to disperse, seize or arrest them, then every justice of the peace, sheriff, under-sheriff, or constable, and any person assisting them, or any of them, shall be held guiltless and be absolutely indemnified and discharged."[6] The phrase, "and any person assisting them," stands limned against the background of American labor history like the silhouette of a noose. By common law "every private person may lawfully endeavor of his own authority and without any warrant or sanction of the magistrate to suppress a riot by every means in his power . . . Not only has he the authority, but it is his bounden duty . . . to perform this to the utmost of his ability."[7] Moreover, by common law it is a misdemeanor to refuse the request of a peace officer to assist him in subduing a riot.

What is a riot? At common law "to constitute a riot, five elements must be present: 1) Number of persons, at least three; 2) Common purpose; 3) Execution or inception of the common purpose; 4) An intent to help one another by force if necessary against any person who may oppose them in the execution of their common purpose; 5) Force or violence not merely used in demolishing but displayed in such a manner as to alarm at least one person of reasonable firmness and courage."[8] Note that the purpose itself may be lawful. If three men (1) start out together (3) across a park to go to the same theatre (2), having agreed in advance to resist the marauders known to be in the park (4), and if they do so resist in such a manner as to alarm someone of reasonable courage (5), they will be technically guilty of a misdemeanor. Or, to put it on a somewhat less fanciful plane, suppose that the three men were Negroes and that there was a lynch mob out to get one of them. At common law their joint resistance would be riotous; their planned intent to jointly resist would make of it an unlawful assembly.[9] "If, though their meeting was in itself lawful, they intended if opposed to meet force by force, that would render their meeting an unlawful assembly."[10]

## 2.

It needs no especially liberal temperament to find the state of law in New Jersey, the joint domain of Frank Hague and the Pennsylvania Railroad, or the similarly anachronistic vestiges of common law, out of line with the temper of, say, the NLRA. Citing from a law written in 1714 is like setting up a straw man that falls of its own encrusted weight. But it is difficult to discuss the broad topic of mass picketing from any such happy middle-of-the-road position; mass picketing has so clear a revolutionary portent that disputants concerning it are likely to be divided into two more or less unambiguous camps.

The American Civil Liberties Union, for example, has found it a difficult issue to straddle. During the first months of this year, it issued a series of releases concerning mass picketing, coming close at times to condemning it altogether, at other times setting specific conditions under which it would be acceptable.

> The American Civil Liberties Union has always supported the right to picket at any time, at any place, for any purpose. Picketing, as the courts have held, is a form of free speech and assembly and is supported on that principle. The only limitations by

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public authorities on picketing supported by the Union are those to keep traffic open for pedestrians and vehicles, to insure access to places picketed, to prevent the use of fraudulent signs, and to maintain order. The Union has supported mass picketing where these conditions are met.

But no claims of the rights to picket justify the use of force to prevent access to plants on strike by those who are willing to cross picket lines. Reports of current strikes show instances in which pickets have prevented access to plants by executive officers, by maintenance crews keeping up such services as heat and lighting, and by clerical workers not members of the striking union. These are plain abuses of the right of picketing. In the view of the American Civil Liberties Union, the right of access, not only of these persons, but of any and all others, is undebatable. The two rights—of picketing and of access to places picketed—are not conflicting . . .[11]

The ACLU now makes a practice, according to another of its memoranda, of sending observers to picket lines where violence is threatened, determining its support of the strikers in court on whether or not in the opinion of the observers it was the strikers or others who started the violence.

Roger Baldwin, the ACLU director, was one of the principal defendants in perhaps the most famous case under the New Jersey Riot Act.[12] Silk strikers in Paterson, after having been denied a hall, held an outdoor meeting in front of the City Hall. The riot act was read to them, and Baldwin and the strike leaders were arrested. According to the indictment, they,

together with divers other evil disposed persons to the number of 500 or more . . . unlawfully, routously, riotously, and tumultuously did assemble and gather together to the disturbance of the public peace, . . . and they did then and there unlawfully, routously, riotously, and tumultuously make and utter great and loud noises and threatenings . . . to the great terror and disturbance . . . of all citizens of said state passing . . .

The law concerning picketing is in such a flux that it is almost irrelevant to a theoretical discussion to note what, at this moment, is or is not permitted. As recently as 25 years ago, picketing had no, or at best a small and precarious, legality. "There is no such thing as peaceful picketing."[13] "The very fact of establishing a picket line by the appellants is evidence of their intention to annoy, embarrass, and intimidate the employees of the appellee company, whether they resorted to physical violence or not."[14] Both of these decisions were written in 1921, as was also the following quotation from a U. S. Supreme Court Decision,[15] which at the time was a big step forward for labor.

. . . The problem /is/ . . . to reconcile the rights of the employer in his business and in the access of his employees to his place of business and egress therefrom without intimidation or obstruction, on the one hand, and the right of the employees, recent or expectant, to use peaceable and lawful means to induce present employees and would-be employees to join their ranks, on the other.[16]

. . . In the present case the three or four groups of picketers were made up of from four to twelve in a group. They constituted the picket line. Each union interested . . . had several representatives on the picket line, and assaults and violence ensued . . . All information tendered, all arguments advanced, and all persuasion used under such circumstances were intimidation. They could not be otherwise. It is idle to talk of peaceful communication in such a place and under such conditions. The numbers of the pickets constituted intimidation. The name 'picket' indicated a militant purpose, inconsistent with peaceable persuasion . . . When one or more assaults or disturbances ensued, they characterized the whole campaign, which became effective because of its intimidating character, in spite of the admonitions given by the leaders to their followers as to lawful methods to be pursued, however sincere.

. . . We think that the strikers and their sympathizers engaged in the economic struggle should be limited to one representative for each point of ingress and egress in the plant or place of business, and that all others be enjoined from congregating or loitering at the plant or in the neighboring streets . . . The purpose should be to prevent the inevitable intimidation of the presence of groups of pickets, but to allow missionaries . . .

Immediately after this decision, the court reversed the finding of the Arizona Supreme Court, which had held loud and libelous picketing to be peaceful and lawful, and declared the anti-injunction law in question unconstitutional.[17] For a while these two Supreme Court decisions, one allowing one missionary and the other restricting the manner of picketing, set the two limits of the pattern for state courts. "State judges who had permitted more pickets now allowed one or at most two; on the other hand, some courts began to permit picketing."[18]

More recently, the courts have held that the right to picket is, as a type of free speech, guaranteed by the Constitution.[19] In general, picketing is lawful if the pickets abstain from "unlawful intimidation." What exactly this phrase means, what exactly the difference is between intimidation and, on the one hand, violence and, on the other, persuasion, is a question that is differently answered by different courts—and differently interpreted by the police force of different areas.

The legality of picketing can be circumvented in various ways. Pickets have been arrested for contempt of court, after violating an injunction,[20] for disorderly conduct, obstructing traffic, assault, disturbing the peace, trespass, vagrancy, unlawful assembly, rioting, criminal syndicalism. If all other legal devices fail, martial law may be declared, as it was, for example, by Governor McNutt in Indiana in 1935. For months following the breaking of a strike in Terre Haute, there were two kinds of law, civil law for everyone else and martial law, eventually administered by civilian officials, for labor.

More effective than this legal structure, however cynically applied, are the extra-legal or semi-legal methods used by the police to combat strikes. Beating up one picket is often a better deterrent than arresting a hundred.

## 3.

A picket may be said to have three purposes, or the same function on three levels: to inform those unaware of the fact that there is a strike, to persuade workers to join the strike, to prevent strikebreakers from going to work. How can these purposes be best served?

The American labor movement, a lusty adolescent, has not developed a sufficient stability to give only one answer to that question. In the labor movement of pre-1941 Germany, the largest and most powerful in the world, and particularly in the

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life work of its organizational genius, Carl Legien, we find a suggestive lesson. As a young man Legien fought Bismarck with indomitable courage, and with patience and skill merged the innumerable local guilds into the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerksschaftsbund*, the ADGB, the German counterpart of the AFL. As its powerful leader, he developed the theory of the strike as a fine art, as an instrument to be used only by the practised hand of a trained surgeon. He wrote a manual, *Der Streik*, which set forth in inflexible detail under what conditions and how a strike should be called and conducted. Marching at the head of disciplined millions, he fought the undisciplined left and ridiculed their theories about a general strike with the slogan *"Generalstreik ist Generalunsinn."* During the first world war he hobnobbed with generals, and he did his best to rid the labor movement of Liebknecht and his cohorts, who set their anti-war principles above party discipline.

In March 1920 a sector of the army led by Kapp and Lüttwitz executed a coup d'etat. The rest of the generals waited for its success to join the rebels, and the Social Democratic Party, depending on the army to keep order, floundered in helpless confusion. The infant German republic was saved by 60-year-old Legien. In contradiction to his every principle, reversing a life's teaching, he went underground, and from his Berlin underground headquarters organized a nationwide general strike. From one hour to the next, trains stopped, there was no gas, no electricity. In three days the Kapp putsch was over.

In a sense the Illinois judge is right: there is no such thing as peaceful picketing. A strike is an industrial battle, and a picket is a patrol.

In war the only inflexible rule is that there are no absolutes, no strategy that may not have to be adapted to changing circumstances. At the moment, in spite of a vast number of strikes, there is relatively little industrial violence. The UE strikers laughed at the incongruity of the eighteenth-century language, and neither their leaders nor anyone else considered the law sufficiently dangerous to be worth fighting as such. A recent cartoon showed a company director speaking to his board: "Now what we have to do is beat the union to a full-page ad." That there are more full-page ads and fewer broken heads follows from two things, neither of which is necessarily permanent. After the CIO drive of the thirties (a truly bloody struggle, culminating in the Chicago Memorial Day massacre of 1937, when police killed ten men—all shot in the back or side—and wounded seventy), labor is relatively powerful. More important, the profits immediately before and during the war were sufficiently high to make business amenable to pressure. But if the post-World War II depression is not absorbed by the pre-World War III boom, then the power of labor and the profits of business will wane together, and the lines will once again be drawn.

## 4.

> . . . Violence and mass picketing . . . are by no means identical. Much violence takes place in the absence of mass picketing, and in many instances this form of picketing actually reduces the likelihood of violence . . . /One/ method, initiated by the IWW during their free speech campaigns in the Far West and perfected during the 1934 Toledo automobile strikes, is to go on with mass picketing as though no court order had been issued. When the police patrol wagons arrive and just before the arrests begin, the picket line breaks up into details of ten. Each detail marches to the rear of the patrol wagon, enters, and quietly seats itself. As fast as new patrol wagons arrive, they are filled and dispatched in perfect order. Before long, the jails are full, no disturbance has been created and the only issue which has been raised is that of feeding the strikers in jail. This helps somewhat with the union's relief problem, and leaves a large force to picket the mill. Inside the jail, classes in parliamentary procedure, trade-union tactics or labor economics may be begun . . .[21]

Violence and mass picketing are not identical. But under the present laws and with the present traditions, mass picketing is regarded by many as an invitation, if not a provocation, to violence. So, at one time, was picketing of any kind. So, at one time, were strikes. So, at one time, were unions. Had labor accepted the animadversions of Chief Justice Taft, we would not have missionary lines of one man; we would have no pickets, nor strikes. "Labor law" would have remained what it once was, the law of master and servant.

Labor must avoid violence where it can, simply because in anything short of a revolution it cannot match the state police power. But it cannot make the avoidance of violence the criterion of its action; in the long uphill fight for labor's "rights," not one step was won without violence.[22]

Mass pickets disturb the peace. What peace? If Karl von Clausewitz had lived a hundred years later, he would write: Peace is the continuation of war by other means. The leaders of a world that has perpetrated Ausschwitz, the White Sea Canal project, and Hiroshima point an indignant finger at labor violence.

Pickets are the union's representatives before the plant gate. A mass picket line is not made up of representatives; it is comparable to that pinnacle of American democracy, the New England town meeting. These are the men who work here. They have, in the curious parlance of the times, "a property right in their jobs," and by their physical presence they vote to strike. From the point of view of labor, there is no better way of building up and maintaining strike morale than this joint action; and from the point of view of society, there is no better way of getting and keeping decent, democratic unions. A union boss can manipulate a few pickets, but if he once involves the whole union membership in united action his days are numbered.

WILLIAM PETERSEN

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[2] New Jersey Revised Statutes, 2:152-4, 5.
[3] Ibid., 2:103-6.
[4] Ibid., 2:176-5.
[5] Ibid., 2:103-7, 8.
[6] Ibid., 2:152-6.
[7] Joseph Baker, The Law of Political Uniforms, Public Meetings, and Private Armies, London, 1937, p. 135.
[8] Ibid., p. 128.
[9] In the case of the State of Tennessee v. Saul Blair et al., the trial of 25 Negroes allegedly implicated in the shooting of a Columbia policeman, the defense attorneys considered raising the issue of whether persons have the legal right to defend themselves against a lynch mob, and decided not to. (N.Y. Post, September 30, 1946)


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[10] Beatty v. Gillbanks (1882), 9 Q.B.D. 308; quoted in Wise, op. cit.
[11] American Civil Liberties Union, "Memorandum on Picketing in Current Strikes," January 1946.
[12] State of New Jersey v. John C. Butterworth et al., N. J. Court of Errors and Appeals, 1928; 58 American Law Reports 744.
[13] 221 Ill. App. 229, 303.
[14] 221 Ill. App. 322, 336.
[15] American Steel Foundries v. Tri-City Central Trades Council, 257 U. S. 184 (1921).
[16] Note the similarity between the line of thought of the U. S. Supreme Court, 1921, and the American Civil Liberties Union, 1946: "The two rights —of picketing and of access to places picketed—are not conflicting."
[17] Truax v. Corrigan, 257 U. S. 312 (1921).
[18] Emanuel Stein and Jerome Davis, ed., Labor Problems in America, New York, 1940, p. 556.
[19] See, for example, Thornhill v. Alabama, 310 U. S. 88 (1941).
[20] "Such arrests are rare . . . In 1904-32 there was an average of one contempt case for every labor injunction granted in New York State." (Stein and Davis, op. cit., p. 558.)
[21] Robert R. R. Brooks, When Labor Organizes, Yale University Press, 1937, p. 106 ff.
[22] In an appendix to his history of the American class struggle, Dynamite, Louis Adamic tries to correlate working-class violence with the acceptance of working-class demands. His attempt is even more vulnerable to learned attack than most sociological statistical surveys, but it is nonetheless a stimulating piece of work. How to prove that the atmosphere is full of air?

●

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

Of POLITICS, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for Oct. 1, 1946.
State of New York
ss.
County of New York

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Nancy Macdonald, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of POLITICS and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:
Name of Publisher: Politics Publishing Co., 45 Astor Place, NYC 3, N.Y.
Editor: Dwight Macdonald, 117 E. 10 St., NYC 3, N.Y.
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2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)
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NANCY MACDONALD
Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1946.

(Seal) GEO. LORCH

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Commission Expires March 30, 1947.

# Popular Culture

## NOTES ON MASS CULTURE

### *I. "The Breadline and the Movies," by Melvin J. Lasky; Politics, 1944.*

**1.**

Before Augustus' institution of the principate, every candidate to a high office had to contribute out of his own pocket to the expenses for the circus and for the distributions of bread. Once all the offices were monopolised by the emperor, the whole electoral body became automatically the client of the Caesars. In Constantinople, the districts formed by the Hippodrome fans were still not without political influence, and the *basilei* were careful not to displease those people in order not to jeopardize the stability of the throne.

One is reminded of this kind of electoral deal when observing the attention paid by certain Socialist city councils of Southern France to the construction of luxurious stadiums, while the sewage system is majestically neglected. And right now, in France, an intense competition is going on between Communists, Catholics and Socialists, for the organisation of as many sport rallies as possible.

**2.**

It is evident that the powers-that-be become concerned about not letting the poor starve only when these are gathered in considerable numbers in the proximity of the rich. It is the common custom of Empires to let millions of peasants die of starvation as a result of droughts, floods, or of those peculiar acts of God that are commonly called "historical necessities," like Five Year Plans and such. But Napoleon used to say that he felt less threatened by the defeat of one of his armies than by Paris being left without bread for two days. From Swift's times to the terrible famine of 1847, no British Government ever bothered with anything like a dole in order to prevent millions of Irishmen from starving. And the very synthetic political device of King Bomba of Naples: "*Feste, Farina, Forca*" (Feasts, Flour and Gallows) did not apply to the far-away peasants of Basilicata, who could placidly be left to live like animals, but to Naples' *Lazzaroni*, whose moods might have some effect on the security of the regime.

**3.**

All this reminds us that "ochlocracy"—the rule of the mob —is nearly always the inevitable complement of "plutocracy." The crude shows of the Circus were certainly meant for a mob. But Dyonisos' theatre was in harmony with the esthetic and ethical sensibility of a *demos*. And the Olympic Games, where Herodotus read his Histories, Pindar sung his Odes, and the best sculptors of Greece erected their statues, were an expression of the aristocratic level attained by Athenian democracy. But the professional athletes of the Hellenistic and Roman periods exhibited themselves for the plutocrats and the mob. On the other hand, from Shakespeare and Lope de Vega to the romantic melodrama, modern theatre has certainly contributed to the formation of popular elites. Shall we say that today the movies are meant for the mob? Or maybe it is the radio? Or industrialized sport? Or all of them together?

Something else might be involved, in all this. Namely, the fact that, from the industrial and bureaucratic managers to the humblest worker in a factory, from the pilot of a dive-

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bomber to the ordinary civilian whose frail body has become the natural target of cosmic explosives, modern man is physiologically condemned to spiritual torpor. He has no use for thinking, since thinking can be of no use to him. After a day of work in a modern city, no energy is left for the efforts of the imagination or for any active emotional life. Artistic receptivity, meditation, and the serene contemplation of motionless forms, are equally impossible. While the movies feed their audiences with ready-made and suitably fleeting images.

4.

For the last twenty years, precisely this relationship between "ochlocracy," plutocracy, and the totalitarian State, has been the stumbling block of Marxist criticism. Marxism has vainly attempted to explain the evolution of "liberal" capitalism toward State capitalism, and the deviation of the "general will" of the masses toward authoritarian States. This is the problem of the "third alternative" which Dwight Macdonald has rightly affirmed to exist between capitalism and a Socialist organisation of society. It is also the problem of the "New Class Society" so conscientiously analyzed by Peter Meyer in POLITICS. The discussion with W. P. Taylor (December, 1944) shows to what extent this unexpected complication of the traditional views is met by "progressive democrats" with little more than an indignant refusal to understand.

Be it empirically identified with the trusts, the "economic royalists," the 200 families (or the 2,000, as in ancient Rome), or the "upper ten thousand," plutocracy does not seem difficult to define. One should add that the addition of "kratos" to "plutos" sounds rather superfluous. The wealthiest have always been the strongest. This was true of the high priests of Ammon, who owned thousands of serfs and millions of acres of Egypt's land; of the Church under Innocent III, fat with benefices and tithes; of the Persian satraps; of the Chinese warlords; of the Thessalian landowners; of the French feudal lords whom Joinville calls "les riches hommes"; of the shipbuilders and merchants who ruled Corinth and Venice; etc.

But for a regime to be correctly defined a plutocracy, certain conditions must be fulfilled: first of all, accumulated money ("odorless money," as the French have called it) must have the power to buy anything, from land to offices, from the treasures of Golconda to men's consciences and honor. The obsession with money and its power in the Elizabethan drama, and already in the Greek lyrics of the Sixth century B.C., expresses well the shock caused by such a fact, when it still appears as a novelty.

The second condition is the diffusion, throughout the social structure, of a rationalistic attitude undermining and unmasking as pretense all the values on which the prestige of royalty, priesthood, birth, and of respectability itself, was supposed to be based.

But, above all, the accumulation and use of wealth must have openly taken the form of shameless pillaging, of what the Germans call precisely *Raubbau*—robbers' economy—with its accompaniment of usury on the greatest scale; plunder of the colonies and of the conquered countries; armaments and war; and the exploitation of the fiscal apparatus for personal enrichment.

Such was the situation in Rome during the last two centuries of the Republic; and such is also the form taken by modern capitalism in its "imperialistic phase," and specially after 1920.

As for the "ochlos," it is of course, the very opposite of what we mean by "the people": it is the people uprooted from its communities, oblivious of its "mores," with nothing left of its original mythology but a few discolored shreds of superstition.

The ancient "ochlos" was made up of peasants chased out of their ancestral strips of land; of all the human rubbish which kept on swarming in the ports of the Middle East; and also of the masses of slaves scrambled together and dispersed —as when, in Delos, ten thousand heads of human cattle were being auctioned off in a single day.

As for the modern "ochlos," only a section of it—and not the most important—can be made to correspond to what the Marxists call *Lumpenproletariat*. To describe the most numerous, and most significant, component of the modern "ochlos," Marxism has not been able to find a better term than the very elastic, and by now completely worn out one, of "petty-bourgeoisie."

On this point, also, as on many others, we are badly in need of some more detailed analysis.

## II. *"A Theory of Popular Culture," by Dwight Macdonald; Politics, February, 1944.*

Dwight Macdonald distinguishes: 1) a High Culture, which he tends to identify with the products of the avant-garde; 2) a "Popular Culture for the elite," which seems to correspond to academicism; 3) a "Folk Art" which is supposed to be "the common people's own institution"—and it is significant that in this connection only Art is mentioned, disregarding the other aspects of culture: philosophy, scientific notions, moral norms, forms and rites of sociability; 4) finally, Popular Culture for the Masses, which is considered to be: a) fairly debased; b) "an instrument of social domination," but a form of culture nevertheless, i.e., a form of the education of sensibility and intelligence.

May I suggest that a few essential factors are here neglected?

1.

The *people* and the *masses* are two entirely different realities. Georges Gurvitch has rightly pointed out that the *mass* is a form of human relationships which, to start with, has nothing to do with the number of individuals involved. The mass is a way of completely disregarding the personality of the other fellow by simply adjusting oneself mechanically to his external movements. It involves a form of sociability which is at the same time primitive and inhuman, insofar as critical consciousness, choice, and the plurality of spontaneous social relations, are definitely absent from it.

The *people*, on the other hand, necessarily implies the existence of a permanent community, and the possibility of communion in the realization of higher values than those derived from mere utilitarian expediency.

2.

In itself, and for itself, and insofar as exploiters and demagogues have a vested interest in its existence, the *mass* cannot have any culture, if we agree that culture implies a certain activity, a certain free choice, on the part of the individual who "cultivates himself" or agrees to "be cultivated." Mass can only receive psychological shocks (to which it usually reacts by collective hysteria) or imperative suggestions whose results are panic, the automatism of the soldier, the oblivious and hopeless resignation of the beast of burden.

3.

Prussian or fascist drill is the very opposite of education. And the astute thwarting of a human soul by Jesuit or Calvinist pedagogy is also nothing but the perversion of what we ordinarily mean by culture or education.

Hence, there is such a thing in society as the possibility of an "anti-culture," as well as of a sheer lack of culture. The Eskimos possess a culture. But all we know of the wretched Fijians seems to indicate the absence among them of any

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possibility of a lively esthetic or religious life. On the other hand, the SS and the gaolers of Auschwitz and Dachau had certainly been radically immunised against any germ of culture.

4.

In England, the industrial revolution began around 1750. Engels and Melville observed its effects between 1840-1850. Having been for two or three generations completely deprived of any contact with the realities from which culture can originate or be kept alive, the men and women of that period had lost all memory of a folk art, and of any real communal life.

The phenomenon has followed industrial capitalism throughout the world: Germany, Poland, Russia, China, etc. Cities like Paris and Lyons seem to have resisted better than others. There, in the nineteenth century, a true popular culture could be found. But what we know of conditions in Alsace, Nantes, the region Lille-Roubaix from 1830 to 1860, tells us the same atrocious tale as Great Britain.

On the other hand, we should remember the level of individual *and* social education among the immigrants who swarmed into America in the nineteenth century from Ireland, Andalusia, Southern Italy, Eastern Europe after having shriveled for several generations in their ghettos and villages, crushed by unimaginable misery. To them, the liberated Negro slaves should be added, and the natives in the colonies brutalized by bad alcohol and forced labor—or those miserable Moroccans expelled from their fields and reduced to an existence that could not be called life any more.

All these creatures had simply been stripped of everything human. There was no Folk Culture left to repress or corrupt in them, in order to make room for the Ersatz of culture (or the systematic non-culture) thrown on the market by capitalism together with the other articles of current consumption.

The human plant is a sturdy one. The worst slums were somewhat cleared and, through revolts and strikes, the wage-workers wrested a little leisure, some hygiene, a few schools. Then the joy of life, and even physical beauty, started blossoming again. But the past evil could not be abolished. The tastes, desires, dreams, aspirations, myths of those *uprooted* people were not nurtured either by undimmed traditions or by those well-formed and clearly defined qualities and peculiarities whose pattern we call "nature." All the things and all the values made available to them for use or knowledge were not only pre-fabricated but also mass-fabricated.

5.

Who fabricated those things and values? Can we say that the vulgarization of culture in modern times reveals the plan of a "bourgeois ideocracy" which can be compared to the plan applied by the Catholic Church, or to the far more brutal ones carried out by totalitarian States?

The rather startling fact is that the class which seized power in France under Louis-Philippe, and, by a slower process, ended up by occupying in England the places which had in earlier times been monopolized by the gentry, this class never possessed a culture which really reflected its inner convictions and spontaneous preferences. These upstarts simply took over (not without a feeling of uneasiness) the furniture of their predecessors, without ever quite succeeding in making themselves at home. They accepted the humanities; scientific progress; such notions as politeness and luxury; such established values as honor (chivalry), glory (especially military glory), virtue (with a preference for a certain asceticism). But their management of this patrimony was a clumsy affair. They could never get rid of a certain peculiarly suspicious attitude toward such people as artists, scientists and ideologists. Culture has often existed *against them* (even Adam Smith expresses contempt for merchants, specialists, etc.), and they have been scandalized or angered by original creations more often than they have felt proud for having helped them financially.

Parallel with this development, the aristocracy progressively lost its ancient hold on culture and the higher forms of sociability. If compared to the brilliant nobility of the 1820's, with its liberal princes and counts, among whom Pushkin was received as an equal, Nicholas II's courtiers (be they friends or the adversaries of Rasputin) were nothing but lamentable idiots. Around Franz Joseph I, during the last part of his reign, one would have looked in vain for such authentically cultivated personages as a Kaunitz, a Metternich, or even a von Gentz. Among the Junkers who enjoyed the favor of Wilhelm II, was there a single one who could be compared to the von Steins, von Hardenbergs, Yorks, conversant with Hegel's philosophy and Goethe's poetry?

The peculiar uneasiness, but also the peculiar vigor, of the nineteenth century were due precisely to this fact, that "high culture" found itself shut off both from the ruling classes and from the people. While the people, on the other hand, was itself disappearing into the "mass." Hence, spiritual life was often divorced from the social.

6.

These are some of the reasons why I would venture to suggest the following distinctions:

(A) A Folk Culture which is the spontaneous creation of every popular milieu, and is easily led into sectionalism and regionalism. This Folk Culture is partly leveled by capitalism and the uniformity which is the inevitable counterpart of modern cosmopolitanism, and partly taken over and made sophisticated by high culture (as it has happened with all kinds of folk-traditions in the music, plastic arts and literature of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries).

(B) High culture has always been the privilege of an elite. In the past, this elite coincided with a section of the aristocracy and of the clergy. With the formation of the bourgeoisie and with the decay of the churches, the intellectual elite found itself in the ambiguous position of an aristocratic outcast, of non-consecrated clerics, of rebels who escaped spiritually from a social system to which they had to submit in all practical matters.

(C) The several varieties of half-culture, characterized by a lesser or greater amount of conformism, moral inertia, existence without individuality or problems, and especially without any living communion with one's fellow men. This Ersatz-culture is the refuge (and the rampart) of the rulers and managers of the present society, together with their satellites. It is the reign of uneasy conscience and bad taste; of hasty and unscrupulous work; of insincerity in all its forms; of artifice and "kitsch"; of official optimism and solemn boredom; of what Flaubert called *pignouflisme.*

(D) Aggressive and destructive Anti-Culture. It represents a tremendous force, a motorized barbarianism a thousand times more devastating than Tamburlan's cavalry. It has at its command all the resources of "applied science" together with the possibility of exploiting *rationally* the lowest instincts of the human animal.

Aggressive Anti-Culture can count among its most recent achievements: 1) modern militarism forced on everybody without distinction, and now perfected according to its inner logic by the atom bomb; 2) the extermination of several colonial peoples (where the naive barbarianism of the Spaniards had failed; 3) the totalitarian State of Hitler and Stalin —which, for all we know, might not be the last word in this field; 4) modern propaganda, based on the degradation of all

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intellectual and emotional values, and consequently of all human dignity and authenticity in things spiritual.

(E) As for the masses, as long as they remain masses (in the sense I have indicated), there is no possibility of culture. To feed them party slogans, to gather them into a circus of some kind, to talk to them through loudspeakers, means to order them around, not to cultivate them.

On the other hand, the new popular communities who succeed in extricating themselves from the masses have several ways of cultivating themselves, however hazardous. In the past, the labor unions, the cooperatives, certain religious sects, the Socialist Internationals have contributed to this task. But the role of smaller formations, like certain groups of friends among the French workers, should not be underestimated.

What these spontaneous social formations most need is, in order to be put on guard against cultural Ersatz and helped to withstand the onslaught of anti-culture, is the guidance of people capable of giving them advice; and, in order to defend their material existence against the pressure of an hostile milieu, a kind of cooperative organisations adapted to the peculiar character of each group.

To encourage the formation of such groups, to educate as many educators as possible, to provide material support for such organisations, should be a very important function of any modern Socialist movement. And one must confess that in the field of actual education Marxist socialism has failed in a particularly lamentable way. "Class consciousness" was supposed to take care of everything.

EUROPEAN

## EISENSTEIN'S "IVAN"
### *a criticism of a criticism*

IN THE June issue of Sartre's monthly, *Les Temps Modernes,* a critic who signs himself "L.-P." reviews Part I of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible,* which was shown in Berlin and Paris last spring. His review is interesting both for its acuteness so far as the film itself is concerned and for its—shall we say?—obtuseness when it comes to drawing general conclusions about Stalinism from these particular perceptions.

"*Ivan the Terrible,*" writes L.-P., "leaves one crushed, shocked, stunned—that is, if two hours of continuous boredom and mediocrity leave the spectators with any strong feelings at all."* He understands, and apparently sympathizes with, the film's purpose: to show the Russian people that in the 16th century their forebears waged the same kind of struggle as they themselves fought in World War II and that then as now "national unity was maintained and victory crowned the agony." But, he complains, "the result is disconcerting, for this Soviet propaganda film justifies the calumnies of reactionaries. It explains Communism in terms of Russian history, the policies of the USSR by those of Mother Russia, and Stalin is confused with the Czar.

"These worthy folk, these simple and crude faces—it was not such that the Soviet cinema used to show us: gone is that violence long smoldering under a kind of sober passion and then breaking out to transform itself almost at once into joy. All that Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg* or Eisenstein's own early films expressed—all this is curdled, frozen. Now we are told that this remarkable people rejoiced in a remarkable chief, an enlightened despot; for the people and the Czar had a soul in common, the Slav soul, and together they fought against the 'unRussian' scoundrels and boyars. The Russian revolution no longer appears as a violent break with a diseased world, but is rather the end, the crown of centuries of effort; if we are to believe Eisenstein, the real ancestor of the USSR is Ivan the Terrible and the 'little people' who supported him . . . A similar attempt was made in such earlier films as *Peter the Great,* but at least that Czar, at a pinch, might be said to represent the Russian people in his struggle for liberation. But Ivan is a visionary, a mystical leader, an infallible No. 1 ('The Czar is always right,' we are told) cut off from the masses and worshipped by them . . .

"This strange choice of a hero causes Eisenstein to fall into the trap that gapes for the historical film: his characters act as though moved by the most grandiose and least real feelings . . . Eisenstein, we shall be told, never pretended to realism—though what is involved here is not realism but simply truth—but rather wished to *transcend* it. Opera is cited—recitative, choral passages, etc. It is clear that Eisenstein was less interested in the individuality of his characters than in their picturesqueness, less in their reality than in their symbolic value. Their acting is reduced to gestures richer in solemnity than in meaning, and their speeches are incantations . . .

"We may also hazard that Eisenstein was not much concerned with propaganda, to judge by the emphasis he puts on photography for its own sake, on researches in form and harmony, on the special relations of objects—on the *mise-en-scene,* in a word. Nor is this all. No longer able to express a revolutionary drive, he abandons man, the sailor of *Potemkin,* and loses himself in objects—a really surprising instance of alienation. Gold, rich costumes, great shadowed doorways, empty ceremonials—these are what fascinate him. The artist who once superbly described fetishism seems himself now to have fallen victim to the most humanly alienating kind of myths. The cult of the infallible leader, the taste for symbolism, for the grand style, for static harmony, for the work of art closed in on itself—is this the message of Eisenstein today?"

The above paragraphs seem to me as discerning politico-esthetic criticism as I have read. The implication about the nature of Soviet society fairly "leaps to the eye," as the French say. It is, therefore, curious to find L.-P. blaming it all on . . . Eisenstein: "The confidence I have always had in the Soviet cinema prevents me from seeing in *Ivan* anything more than a melodrama played by a provincial opera company under the patronage of a pompous Mycaenas. But this same confidence leads me to believe that such a failure is the result of a deviation from the real forces of Soviet art . . ." That the pompous Mycaenas lives in the Kremlin and exercises the most minute control of the art he finances—this rudimentary fact is somehow excluded from L.-P.'s alert consciousness. He is appalled by Eisenstein's choice of Ivan as a folk-hero for the Soviet people, and is perplexed by the falsification of history this involves: "I don't understand the naive attempt made by the Soviet cinema to rehabilitate the past." Yet such rehabilitation has been going on in Soviet culture for almost twenty years now, and quite openly, too. As for the choice of Ivan as a hero, the official condemnation of the film—which presumably represents L.-P.'s "real forces of Soviet art"—makes no objection to this. On the contrary, it criticises Eisenstein precisely because he has not "rehabilitated" history *enough:* "Contrary to historic truth, Ivan the Terrible has not been shown as a progressive statesman, but as a maniac and scoundrel."

* Other Parisians reacted similarly. *Time* for April 1 last reports that audiences "booed and stomped and hissed at the all but Shakespearean intensity of the great static close-ups, the poetic registration of emotion, the grandiose, dance-like gestures of the players . . . When Ivan's enemies mugged fear, Frenchmen cheerfully shouted 'Cowards!' . . . In the long scene where Ivan almost dies, the theatre rustled with smothered laughter and one strident voice speared up from the dark: '*Alors, mon vieux,* kick the bucket and we'll all go home'."

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This obtuseness as to the whole in a critic who is so sensitive to the quality of the part proceeds from L.-P.'s identification of Stalinism with revolutionary socialism. So, too, Sartre, in the course of the lead article in the same issue, a closely reasoned and most impressive refutation of dialectical materialism, takes Stalin seriously as a Marxian philosopher, criticising his formulations as though they were at least those of a Kautsky. Even when they are critical, as Sartre is, French intellectuals frequently seem to have the grossest illusions about Stalinism, to shrink from any general criticism. (Another instance is the extreme caution—not to use a harsher term—in matters concerning Russia and Stalinism, of *La Revue Internationale*, the interesting new monthly founded by Pierre Naville and other Marxists who were once of a Trotskyist orientation.) France's position in international politics doubtless explains this timidity on the part of many of her intellectuals, but it hardly justifies it. And the results are bizarre when, as in the case of L.-P., the critic sees clearly the specific qualities of Stalinist culture without it occurring to him to examine with equal rigor the coarsely fabricated myth of Stalinism.

D.M.

*NOTES ON THE NEW CENTER OF WORLD CULTURE*

(1)

Homemade wit and a vulgar musical stew fills nearly all the program . . . Perhaps this can be tolerated in forgotten places of Western Europe but not on the Soviet stage . . . Triviality and banality cannot be tolerated in Soviet vaudeville. (Izvestia's jazz critic, as quoted in Time, Sept 2.)

(2)

To Generalissimo Stalin 50,000 Tuvinians indited a note of thanks for allowing them to withdraw from the capitalist world and enter the Soviet Union. Tannu Tuva (pop. 65,000) is now a Mongolian farming, mining and cattle-raising area about the size of Nevada, between Siberia and Outer Mongolia . . . The Tuvinians promised to turn their country into "one of the blooming corners of the Great Soviet Union." They added that since Russia "provided us with the opportunity to bypass the capitalistic path," Tannu Tuva has organized state and collective farms, tractor stations, wagon works, shoe factories, and developed gold, coal and salt mines. Said the letter: "We now have our own intellectuals." (Time, Aug. 26.)

(3)

After a 5,500 mile journey, the Mongol delegates arrived for U.N.'s opening session at Lake Success . . . They were encamped at Manhattan's Hotel Plaza . . . Their only recorded comment: Paris was the most beautiful city they had ever seen, "but so *old*. In Ulan Bator (Outer Mongolia's capital) now, there is so much building—something new popping up all the time." (Time, Sept. 9.)

(4)

"Generally speaking," said recently purged Soviet writer, Mikhail Zostchenko, "it is rather difficult to be an author." (Time, Oct. 14.)

*TO THEM THAT HATH, SHALL BE GIVEN*

The names of more than 5,000 women who cracked champagne bottles and accepted gifts in launching war-time ships have been turned over to the Senate War Investigating Committee . . . Some of the names were just names—wives of men who died in action, girl welders selected for excellent production records. Some shipyards scaled the gift upward in accordance with the prominence of the sponsor. The range might be thus indicated: Mrs. Frank Rabas, "address unknown," received a $15 trinket box, and Mrs. William D. Leahy, wife of the President's Chief of Staff, a diamond bracelet worth $2,516.

—N. Y. Times, Sept. 10.

*THE P.M. TEMPO*

It is refreshing to have some one admit that "P.M." does not rush hastily and blindly into editorial positions—but takes two or three days, if necessary, to get its feet on the ground.

—letter from John P. Lewis, P.M.'s managing editor, in The New Republic, Oct. 21.

# Free and Equal

## A STORY

I HAVE a friend who has an old colored servant. My friend never married and her brother never married. They lived together and both worked, so both were away all day from their Staten Island home. When they came back in the evening, it was Mary who was waiting for them. It was Mary who really meant "home" to them, and for many years. One day she astonished my friend by saying: "Miss Elinor, I have not been sending all my money to my family in Virginia, I have been putting some of it aside. And now I want to see the world. I want to travel." Elinor said: "Why Mary you are afraid to go to New York alone, how can you travel?" "Oh," she said, "I have enough to take you, too, I can't go without you, Miss Elinor." Then my friend said: "And where do you want to go?" And Mary said: "I want to go to Paris. I hear in Paris they treat colored people like they treat white people, and before I die I want to go to a place where colored people are treated just the same as other people." Elinor said to me in telling me about it: "I determined that she *should* go. Of course she had no idea of how much it would really cost, but I sold a bond and that made it possible. I went to the French Line and said I want adjoining staterooms and I want her to be treated in every way just as you treat all your passengers. The officials of the line said: 'We are, of course, willing to do everything in our power, but one cannot count on the good breeding of the American passengers.' The first evening two or three Americans placed at the table were very rude, but the others and Elinor protected Mary, and Elinor says she does not think Mary saw their rudeness. The seats of the rude Americans were changed—and it was they who were ostracized for the rest of the voyage and Mary was the queen of the boat. Her hair was already white and Elinor says she looked so pretty in a dark gray-blue suit and was so supremely happy that she charmed every one. They stayed three weeks, went to a pension frequented only by the French, avoided cafes and all places where Americans might be rude, and saw the beauties of Paris, and everywhere Mary was treated 'just the same as other people.' She came back rejuvenated. At the time Elinor said: 'I think it will add ten years to Mary's life.' It has. That was in 1932. She is still living though now very old."

—*Anna Melissa Graves in the foreword to "Benvenuto Cellini Had No Prejudice Against Bronze: Letters from West Africans." (Baltimore, 1942)*

## SOUTH AFRICAN RACISM

Sir,

Recent grave incidents of racial persecution have occurred in Durban, South Africa, and we should like to draw the attention of your readers to these disturbing facts.

These incidents have arisen as a result of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, by which the South African Government has restricted the acquisition of land by Indians. This is the last of a long series of discriminatory decress, of which the most important have been that in 1896, removing the right of the Indians to Parliamentary representation, and that of 1924 depriving them of Municipal franchise.

The Indians have no means of democratic representation. At

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present they are being offered "communal representation," but the three men they may elect to represent them must be Europeans. Because of this lack of any effective means of expressing their grievances through the ordinary legislative channels, the Indians have been forced to adopt a policy of passive resistance, in the hope of drawing public attention to their grievances.

Their resistance has been met with brutality, both by the responsible authorities and by organized white mobs whose activities have been condoned by the police and magistrates. The Indians adopted the method of squatting on waste land in the areas where they were prohibited from acquisition. Almost immediately, they were assaulted by strong groups of white hooligans armed with iron bars, wood cudgels, etc. Many of them were beaten until unconscious, and on the 21st June an Indian policeman, who happened to be near the site in plain clothes, was beaten so severely that he later died from head wounds. Further violent attacks took place on the 23rd June, and the following description is taken from the sworn affidavit of the Rev. Michael Scott, a European clergyman who has supported the Indians in their struggle.

"A number of Europeans began shouting when we appeared and were seen talking in excited groups. After about half an hour whistles and shouts were the signals for a concerted charge upon us. A crowd of Europeans, numbering about 25-30 and including one or two women, came running towards us. Some of the young men were dressed up as sportsmen wearing running shorts. They were shouting "Currie guts," "Coolie guts" and "We don't want the ..... coolies here." They immediately began assaulting the volunteers. They were punched in the face and about the body until they fell down and I saw two of them being kicked while on the ground."

An Indian woman who was present during an attack later the same night gives the following statement of her experiences:

"I was standing with my group when we were attacked. Blows were rained upon my body and kicks inflicted. I fell to the ground dazed. I picked myself up and again they hit and kicked me and again I fell. They tried to tear me apart by pulling my legs in opposite directions. I struggled to my feet again and once more I was subjected to blows and kicks in the stomach. Whilst lying there on the ground they began to search me and I heard one of the Europeans say: 'These coolies have lots of jewelries, let's take them away.' I had no jewelry on me. They then stopped assaulting me and picked me up and threw me in the gutter."

The police appear to have made no attempt to interfere with these brutal assaults. Instead, they joined with the crowd in making offensive remarks about the resisters, and eventually arrested many of the latter. Those injured Indians who were not arrested were taken to hospitals and dismissed after totally inadequate treatment.

Many of the resisters, but so far as can be ascertained, none of their assailants, were brought before the Durban magistrates, who adopted a wholly hostile attitude. At first short sentences of imprisonment were imposed, usually seven days, but later heavier sentences have been awarded. Ironically, the Indians have been imprisoned under the Riotous Assemblies Act, whereas in fact the only riotous assemblies were those of white hooligans who had gathered to attack them. One man, M. D. Naidoo, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and news has since come through that many other Indians, as well as their European supporter, the Rev. Michael Scott, have been sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

Racial persecution of this kind seems to be more in the spirit of fascism than of the democracy for which the South African government claims to stand. The time has come for the outraged conscience of the rest of the world to be expressed, and we therefore suggest that letters and resolutions condemning the discrimination practiced against Africans and Indians in South Africa should be sent to the South African High Commissioner in London, at South Africa House, Trafalgar Square.

HERBERT READ
*Chairman, Freedom Defence Committee, 8 Endsleigh Gardens, London, W.C.1, England*

# Scientific Method and Political Action

THE massed facts of sociology are stunning in their weight, number and complexity. Surely it would seem that with all this information on hand, we should be able to establish with reasonable accuracy the means toward some agreed end —say, democratic socialism; yet it is a truism that the number of proposed means equals the number of people working toward that end.

Why this should be has been a major subject of discussion among socialists for some time. The conclusion recently reached in POLITICS by its editor, that the fault lies in the method itself, can be taken as a polar opposite to the usual charge and counter-charge of "failure to interpret the facts correctly."

It is the writer's opinion that the real difficulty, in true dialectical fashion, lies in the middle. First and greatest of the limitations of scientific method in politics is the actual poverty of useful facts. For so complicated a problem as social relationships, the quantity of available information is not nearly so great as it appears to be; and much of what we are asked to consider as data for scientific operation turns out to be only reports of a chain of biased observers and recorders, reports of events occurring under special conditions we cannot duplicate, and so on. This seems to be the essence of Damon Knight's recent letter: that sociology as a science is rooted in other sciences, particularly psychology and semantics, and cannot be expected to produce stable systems from half-bricks and old bottle-tops.

Secondly, scientific method deals with premises as well as with means and ends. Indeed, it hardly deals with Ends at all as we are accustomed to use that word in politics. Marxism, famous for its pro-scientific attitude, is one of the few social theories of the past five centuries which has dealt with ends as primary factors. Spengler, Toynbee, Silas McKinley, Sorel, Pareto and a host of others never pretended to examine what is desirable for the future. They hoped simply to make some understandable pattern of the social facts at their hands (and consider in the light of the previous paragraph the number of those facts Spengler felt it necessary to include!), to explain *how* things happened. They sought premises, from which fact-relationships could be deduced. Socialism went farther; it not only examined and deduced, but it undertook to crusade for some desirable end, on the basis of what it had discovered.

That this was high courage no one can question. That it was a miserable failure seems equally incontrovertible. The blame fell upon Marx, upon bad faith on the part of individual Marxists, upon misinterpretation, almost anywhere but the evident place. Spengler *et al* were no help; they had alternative premises that were good here and weak there, and no encouragement for anyone who wanted to *do* something, to change the pattern. Whatever one may feel about the atomic bomb, the

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scientific method cannot be blamed for the failure of scientific socialism. That method cannot operate on fractional or false premises, and no other premises are available to us now.

It is probably up to the scientists themselves to evolve new ones, as indeed the proponents of General Semantics seem to be doing. Political theorists have shown themselves too prone to accept almost anything as a "fact" which tends to confirm a favorite premise, and to lop off any inconvenient overhang. Given a few centuries, there is reason to believe that scientific method may be able eventually to do what Mr. Macdonald thinks it can do now, that is, point out to us the most effective means to the end we desire. At the moment it can do nothing of the kind. It can only tell us that thus far every application of scientific method to politics has resulted in an explosion.

The scientific method, then, *is not now operable* upon the fields of history and politics as a whole. To insist that it never will be is to endorse a prejudice of Tolstoi's which is less excusable in our day than it was in his—he at least only suspected how little we know of the necessary basics.

On the other hand, to abandon the pretense that we know, or that anybody knows, all the laws by which history operates, is essential. There are two varieties of scientific method, one of which, operation from an established premise, we have considered above. The other, which consists of behaving *as if* a given set of premises were true until the evidence indicates otherwise, is called empiricism, and in politics it is the Mark of the Beast.

Actions predicated by a given theory must have predictable results if the theory is sound. On this very assumption, strikes, insurrections, and international wars are called. To take such mass action in the name of a cause means that there is some reason to believe that the effect will be as predicted. Once we accept, however, that the root of politics and history does not lie in formulations or known laws, the ethical excuses for organized conflict on a large scale simply disappear. We cannot be certain that the action will produce anything like the desired result—indeed, to consider the evidence scientifically is to become aware that it does so only by rare accident—and to take life and destroy property in the mere *hope* of such a result is a multiple crime. This is the crime of empiricism, with human beings as the experimental subjects.*

There is, therefore, the soundest of reasons for individual action in politics, as opposed to mass action; the phenomenon of alienation, a brilliant Marxist percept, is but one of many results of proceeding as if one knew it all. There is also good reason for believing that individual action will be considerably more effective in the long run. Much of the energy devoted to pushing a scientific political movement eventually is siphoned off into technical schisms, as we have seen. The typical leaders of such movements are the party generals, inflexible of mind, bound to the limits of their particular sets of "historical laws," submerged up to their noses in technical verbiage of the order used by Karl Korsch, and—most weakening of all—proclaiming the inevitability of whatever program they wish to see adopted. This kind of political "thinking" does more than lead men into useless and damaging action; it becomes a substitute for action itself. The language of bureaucrats and of manifestoes is a common one, a sort of trade jargon which allows one to think one has done something when actually one has only said something.

Under extreme conditions—Belsen, or under fire—this jargon of power is simply in the way; as it is in the individual action of the C.O. or saboteur; politics becomes political action, and assumes an almost Biblical specificity. The individual *does* something; a small something that really produces the results it was supposed to produce.

This is no easy solution. It involves lying down across truck driveways, refusing to pay taxes in wartime, and many other actions as difficult and dangerous which do not offer the Millenium at a single stroke. With the Bomb in our hands, however, we can no longer afford the experimental slaughters of one or another theorist's Easy Solution. We shall, instead, do well to remember Pareto's dictum that no action is logical which cannot be expected to produce the desired results when the total circumstances are known; and that whether or not the total circumstances are unknowable as Engels thought, they are certainly unknown today in any field where mass action is applicable.

JAMES BLISH

* Dostoievsky's famous problem, recently emphasized by non-violentists, as to whether or not the coming of the Millenium could be justified if it involved the death by torture of a single child, has a peculiar poignancy in our civilization, where a hundred thousand lives are snuffed out for expectations far less definite. Recent newspaper reports record that even Admiral Halsey, not very widely known for humanitarian sentiments, considered the Hiroshima bombing "unnecessary."

## NEW ROADS: Discussion

Sir:

One is tempted to say that the highest genius of Macdonald is for art. Brilliant as is "The Root Is Man," the flashes of his earlier article, "The Bomb," are brighter, and its thunders more ominous; in it he seems freer to be the artist, from the potent front page layout on through all the comments of that most convincing of atom-bomb articles. It is partly then in terms of artistry that some of his present terminology is to be interpreted. It is the appeal of an artist, admirably calculated to bring home the full significance which he has put into the terms "Progressive" and "Radical," to set off the tiny Radical group in such a way as to present it as one of two basic branches from the old Leftwing stem. A more prosaic person might simply have pointed out the transformed role of the Progressive groups, and dissociated himself from it. Similarly, his insistence on classifying himself as a dualist is a matter of dramatic terminology. He might have been satisfied merely to speak of a limitation of the scientific method, without asserting that there were two worlds, scientific and ethical. If a person maintained that there was nothing to music but rhythm, his critic would not assert that there were "two musics"—rhythm and also pitch; rather, he would point out that there were many things involved in the same music: duration, stress, pitch, and also timbre, melody, and personal associations. But the seemingly absurd idea of "two worlds" has, in the larger problem, artistic justification both as a challenge to old-line critics, and as a goad to the imagination.

However, not all the weaknesses in his terminology can be traced to artistic flair. In particular, I want to point out a line of historical interpretation which is opened up by his rejection of the classic conception of progress; his failure as yet to follow it through is partly to blame for some false notes in his argument. He still looks on the phenomena associated with the Industrial Revolution of recent centuries as a general cultural stage in which Europe was essentially the first of a type, rather than as a unique episode in which Europe was essentially distinctive. This leads him to look for an

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equally "typical" succeeding "stage," and to conceive of his Radical movement in terms of the Marxist movement of the previous "stage." A scepticism of the conventional doctrine of progress should lead him to be doubtful of such an analysis.

That great movement, inclusive of Newtonian science, the Industrial and French Revolutions, and the expansion of Europe, which broke out of the West upon the world at large in so torrential a fashion as to deserve the name "the Western Revolution," was a phenomenon not lightly to be compared with any earlier one till we get back perhaps to the introduction of agriculture itself. It bears the marks of a tremendous event, rather than those of an ordinary stage of history through which society after society might conceivably go. It dominates the world for three centuries, from the beginning of French, Dutch, and English expansion about 1600, till the war of 1914 which split open the Victorian world order in which the whole had climaxed, and put the Western powers and their economy on the defensive. But its limits are not the limits of a distinctive age: it itself, rather, forms a dividing line, a revolutionary transition from one condition to another. During its whole development, the movement vitally affected every part of the world; and the greater part of the world was affected by it in a very different manner from the way it affected Europe—India, for instance, lost its industry and lowered its standard of living thru the same events which produced the reverse effect in Europe. The event has left us all a tremendous heritage which will permanently affect us; but the present industrialization of China, for instance, must of necessity be a quite different thing from the original industrialization of Western Europe; the latter occurred during the close of a previous age, and blasted it apart; the former is occurring in the new conditions which the Western Revolution created.

To Marx, however, and to the other founders of Progressivism, living in the midst of Victorian Europe in all its glory, the situation seemed quite different. Not looking seriously beyond Europe, except to smile at the "backward" peoples on the periphery, he took the internal course of Europe the conqueror of the world to be only the continuation of an internal local development which he traced in the Europe of the past. Not realizing how peripheral and dependent on more advanced cultures the older Europe had been, he erected certain "stages" that appeared in local history into general predecessors of the "stage" of capitalism, and invited the rest of the world to pass through the same "stages." His provincialism went so far as to compare the world-wide transformations in which he found himself with that local aberration on a frontier involved in the loss of its western provinces by the Roman Empire, which, as the "Fall of Rome," the European descendants of those western provincials were accustomed to cite as prime example of social transformation.

The consequences of Marx' inability to see beyond the local condition of Europe are carved in his whole analysis of history. The suddenness of the changes within expanding Europe he took to indicate the division of all history into stages, each with a well-defined species of class-exploitation to mark it. The predominance of the industrial capitalists in the expansion that marked the age he took to indicate that every age must have its particularly predominant exploiting class. Living in the "hundred years' peace" that prevailed internally as Europe made war on the rest of the world, he saw class-struggle as the chief form of conflict, and ignored the significance of wars. At last, riding the tide of prosperity with the rest of the Occident, he like everyone else was led to assume that all these changes must be progressive, and the next change must lead to the ideal.

But meanwhile, the spree of expansion on which Europe's kind of progress was based was indeed coming to the next change which Marx so incisively foresaw in certain of its aspects; but that change marked its end. The old Concert of Europe, disposing in fraternal fashion of the rest of the world; the old capitalist democracy, indulging in laissez-faire at home and promotion abroad—are gone. Not only did Marx' revolution fail to materialize, but the whole circumstances under which he theorized vanished. Europe is humbled, and her supermen suffer famine like any backward race; the world has gone global, and we are all in the pot together.

Now, therefore, just as we see that the internal class struggle may be no more significant than other relations such as those of war; just as we see that progress, while it may come, is by no means written into the nature of things; so we may doubt whether exploitation most typically progresses by stages, taking clearly defined forms of systematic class dominance; rather than forming, ordinarily, a hopelessly interwoven welter of property, caste, and jurisdictional rights, varying, but not distinctly enough to warrant division into species except for the broadest methodological purposes. The web of human exploitation is continuous and indefinitely varied, and the emergence and subsidence of the capitalists during the Western Revolution was a passing emphasis rather than a specific form.

In this light, Macdonald's insistence on speaking of Bureaucratic Collectivism in Marxoid terms; his use of the word *Bureaucratic,* as if to emphasize a class, rather than the more general word *State,* more commonly associated with what he speaks of—these seem to indicate a failure to escape from the provincialism of the Marxian analysis. Similarly, Macdonald places the turn in events in 1928, when Marxism may be said to have been found lacking, rather than, say, in 1914, when the conditions in terms of which Marxism must prove out of date arrived. He thinks within Marxism, taking his date from a Marxist point of view, and not from a point of view in terms of which Marxism itself is viewed as a historical phenomenon.

In the same way, he looks on his Radicalism exclusively as a heritage from the old socialism; his pairing it with modern Progressivism is more than poetic contrast. Disregarding the Marxoid origin of his concept of Progressivism—a concept very difficult to apply beyond the Western nations which are heirs of the old Victorian order, and in terms of which he conceives the Rightist-Progressivist alignment—one can point out that his Radicalism is hardly the heir only of the old socialism. Thoreau is also an ancestor, but he is hardly either a collectivist or a founder of the Left . . . on the contrary! Macdonald's Radicals, once divorced from a Marxoid analysis which still thinks in terms of the old internal European political right and left, have a dangerous kinship with many diverse groups—from JWs to Gandhists and Tolstoyans. His Radicals may from one point of view be looked on as radical libertarian nonconformists—using the term "nonconformist" to characterize all that ancient succession of extraordinarily diverse movements which, on the basis of an ethical judgment of the forms of society, have gone on to assume personal responsibility in relation to them.

I do not mean to suggest that Macdonald's Radicalism must form only another nonconformist sect, of a less religious cast than most (though the close similarity in certain respects of his program to that of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and of his personal history to that of A. J. Muste might suggest it). Social forces act in many planes and in diverse directions, and a relationship on one level to one group of movements need not categorize a new group exclusively. But as a Quaker, I feel bound to welcome both the radicalism and the libertarianism of Macdonald into nonconformist lines. The religious

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nonconformisms of the past have become too easily institutionalized, as has Quakerism, but there is some life left! We hope that his Radicalism will not become a sect, like the Trotskyites or the Quakers, or even to a degree the F.O.R., but will rather have a creative influence in all these places where men are willing to come out from conformity, on the basis of their ideals.

But although the libertarianism and radicalism of Macdonald's ethics I feel a special need of for Quakerism, for example, has seriously lacked them in its own brand of nonconformism; yet perhaps the most serious contribution an ex-Marxist nonconformist can make is to teach us to analyze history, as Marx meant to, so as to learn if possible what are the movements in it which may be of use to an idealist, as another arm than his direct nonconformism, toward remolding the world while he is living in it. It is here that Macdonald's poetic sense, combined with a possible failure to follow through in the analysis of the Western Revolution and the meaning of Marx' role in it, may do more than produce an odd terminology. It may lead him to forget history altogether.

MARSHALL HODGSON

**HEAVENLY ECONOMICS**

Most people find it a major problem to keep income and outgo properly balanced. A businesswoman had received, one year, a small increase in salary, but was told by her employer that there was no possibility of her getting another for two years. However, she was grateful for her raise. Although the new salary did not adequately compensate her for the work she was doing, she refused to accept the suggestion of limitation to her progress.

This woman was a Christian Scientist, and so began to study to gain a spiritual sense of values and a right concept of what constitutes true increase. . . . She no longer felt concerned about a salary measured in dollars, but accepted understandingly the basic fact that all she could possibly need was provided by God, whose law supersedes even the most rigid human policies and plans. At the end of a year of prayerful effort to maintain this truth in her thinking, this worker was given the largest salary increase the company had ever granted her. It was gratefully received, but what was valued far more was the proof of God's everpresent providence, which annulled the limitations of mortal thinking. . . . Greatly comforted, the woman continued to rejoice daily over her increased understanding of the true nature of supply. . . . Even though she did not see how her need was to be met, she accepted the spiritual fact that supply, having its source in God, is constant.

**—"The Christian Science Monitor," June 13.**

**WHY ONE GETS DISCOURAGED SOMETIMES**

In the creation of any work of art, whether a symphony, a painting, or a perfume, the great is not frequently achieved, the masterpiece not readily attained. That is why the launching of a new perfume by Coty is an international event—why, inevitably, it is a rare event. 'Muse' is the climax of eight years of sensitive composing, marked by many moments of discouragement but crowned by ultimate triumph. . . . 'Muse' is destined to become a classic; growing ever greater with the passage of time. It is a perfume for the woman who has the instinct to recognize a masterpiece at its inception.

**—¾ page ad, published at vast expense in the "N. Y. Times" for April 9.**

This is the story of GriGri. GriGri is pronounced Gree Gree, and sounds a bit like the love call of a lonely little cricket lost in the ecstatic contemplation of a dew drop. . . . GriGri is not for the inflamed, the acrobats, but Eros, God of Love, may have used it when he was young . . . We created GriGri because it will replace nicely the block buster and robot bomb; because someone may write soon again a "What Price Glory" show and because we dream that eventually Eve may remember to whisper again "yours . . . very . . . truly."

**—full-page ad, purchased at even vaster expense by Parfums Weil, in the "N. Y. Times" for April 11.**

**"DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA," VOL. III**

Just Arrived at Altman's—Exquisite French Lingerie—One-of-a-Kind Slips—from $69.50 to $265.00.

**—Ad in "N. Y. Times" for May 23.**

# Books

*ART AND SOCIAL NATURE. By Paul Goodman. Vinco Publishing Co., 500 East 161 St., New York 56, N. Y. $3.00*

Paul Goodman's writings seem to arouse the most violent feelings in many otherwise equable people. Contempt, ridicule, indignation. His style they find precious, his matter, outrageous. I, too, find Goodman's style for the most part mannered and irritating—though he is capable on occasion of masterly effects and eloquence concentrated to the point of epigram. I, too, wish he would write less and better, would put more flesh on the apodictic bones of his ideas, and would haul down the banner: *Pour epater les bourgeois.* (That was the motto of The Hedonists, a select club of three to which I belonged when I was attending Phillips Exeter Academy.)

But these are the defects of his qualities, and in any case hardly justify such violent emotions. It is, I suspect, his ideas, not his manner, which "puts off" people. Partly the insistence on sex as a primary factor in our lives—or rather the concrete attempt to work out specifically just what this primacy implies, for after Freud sex *in general* has been, so to speak, accepted in the best intellectual circles; it is only when some one insists on getting specific about it that every one gets angry. But more generally, what "puts off" people is Goodman's habit of following his ideas to their rational conclusion no matter how "absurd" it may turn out to be; and of speculating imaginatively and freely on every possible and impossible occasion. To some, these appear to be defects; to others, including myself, they are great and rare merits in a political thinker. Naturally, I'm prejudiced in Goodman's favor, since my own thinking has been influenced by his ideas, where it has not, independently, come to conclusions similar to his. But I cannot but admire the clarity and depth of a passage like this:

"A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life . . . The libertarian is rather a millenarian than an utopian. He does not look forward to a future state of things which he tries to bring about by suspect means; but he draws now, so far as he can, on the natural force in him that is no different in kind from what it will be in a free society, except that there it will have more scope and will be immeasurably reinforced by mutual aid and fraternal conflict. Merely by continuing to exist and act in nature and freedom, the libertarian wins the victory, establishes the society; it is not necessary for him to be the victor *over* any one. When he creates, he wins; when he corrects his prejudices and habits, he wins; when he resists and suffers, he wins. I say it this way in order to teach honest persons not to despond when it seems that their earnest and honest work is without 'influence.' The libertarian does not seek to influence groups but to act in the natural groups essential to him—for most human action is the action of groups. Consider if several million persons, quite apart from any 'political' intention, did only natural work that gave them full joy! The system of exploitation would disperse like fog in a hot wind. But of what use is the action, really born of resentment, that is bent on correcting abuses yet never does a stroke of nature?

"The action drawing on the most natural force will in fact establish itself. Might is right: but do not let the violent and

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the cowed imagine for a moment that their weakness is might. What great things have *they* accomplished, in practice, art, or theory?"

This seems to me a genuinely *poetic* insight into the problem of revolutionary action, and, as such, much more "practical" than the approach of, let us say, the CIO-PAC on the one hand and Norman Thomas and Max Shachtman on the other. It is this practicality, this getting down to cases without the usual palaver, that really gets under people's skin.* For we all know that we live in a corrupt and alienating society, and that we don't *really* get much pleasure or satisfaction from the things which our social institutions, from the business world to the colleges and government bureaux, trap us into doing; and it makes us angry to have some one quite simply insist on this commonplace and unmentionable fact. As I have noted in these pages before, the Marxist is revolutionary only in one walled-off part of his life, and for the rest thinks and behaves just about like other people. The sort of revolution Goodman proposes involves not only political institutions but also our everyday, personal way of living and thinking. These essays contain some hints as to how it may be done, and some arguments as to why it should be done. They are seeds rather than fruits, but seeds from which something may grow.

D. M.

## SIXTH REPORT ON PACKAGES

THIS is a gloomy report; perhaps it will stir some readers to action. In the past three weeks, we have received pledges from only six new individuals offering to send packages to families in Europe. Furthermore, others who have been sending are now forced to drop out because of increased living costs. "I'm very sorry to have to report this," writes a New York reader, "but since our income will be sharply reduced this coming year, we will have to cut down on our contributions for food packages." "I am indeed sorry to report that I am no longer in a position to aid G.M.," another writes in from Michigan; "I am now attending school under the G. I. Bill of Rights and am rather hard pressed to make the $65 a month do for my own needs." And a third: "Due to household finances (I'm out of a job), I regret to notify you that we must discontinue our packages to Mr. F. in France."

This falling off in help does not coincide with a decline in the need abroad. There are now over 200 European families whom we have been in correspondence with, whom we know deserve and need generous help from our readers, and yet who as yet have not received a single package. Half of these are in particularly great need of help; 46 Spanish refugee families in France, and 60 German antifascist families. It is not pleasant to read a letter like the following, written in English by a young German girl:

"Dear Friends: You wrote me that a friend of you will send me a gift parcel as I have fought and suffered for my antifascist convictions and as even I have lost my whole family during the war. You asked me to let you know if packages don't reach me: I am really sorry to have to tell you that I have got nothing at all. You wrote me as well to tell you if I have any special wishes and so I would like to ask you, if you wouldn't select for me a young reader who would not only prove his belief in international solidarity by sending me a technical support but a nice spirit one too, because it would be a good exercise for me to write in English and your reader can write to me in French as well in German, I don't really mind. Please let me know if you would like a short description of the experiences I had during the war. I would tell it to you even I didn't it yet to nobody. It was too cruel and I was so young! (I am only 21 years old now)."

### SOME LETTERS FROM GERMANY

The big job right now, we feel, is to get as many packages as possible sent to the 60 families in Germany for whom we have as yet found no American gift-senders. The official ration level for the British and American zones has now been set for this winter at 1500 calories a day, which is 500 calories below the minimum health level. The need is, therefore, greater in Germany than in other parts of Europe—except for Austria and Greece. The kind of people to whom we want to send fraternal aid—our list is made up from the suggestions of trusted friends over here—may be indicated by excerpts from some of the letters they have written us in the past few weeks. These letters bring out strongly that it is not only material aid these German antifascists welcome; above all, it is the feeling they are no longer isolated, that they now have a chance to enter into personal contact with people over here.

*W. L., Gelsenkirchen (written in English)*: I have received your letter of August 15. You can hardly imagine what a surprise and joy I feel. During the hard years of the Third Reich, especially trying for us antifascists, we nearly lost our belief in mankind's solidarity. Be assured, even today we have very little reason in Germany to believe in it . . . A superhuman optimism is necessary for believing in the community of mankind, progress, and deliverance of the oppressed people, and for not getting tired of the battle for freedom and justice. Your action of solidary help is strengthening for us to keep on the way; for Fascism has not yet been defeated all the same. . . . Whatever you may send is a dear sign of your human help. This humanity we vote for again and again; it finally will and must remove the boundaries among nations.

*E.R., Heuchelheim/Giessen (written in English)*: Quite surprisingly, we received your letter of July 5, 1946. It is rather hard to say what pleased us more: the material aid you promised us or the political attitude which created such solidarity. . . . I am 36, my wife is 32. Before 1933 both of us used to be active with the German Workmen's Youth Movement. After Hitler, we helped put out underground anti-Nazi papers, and were arrested and imprisoned. In 1942, they called me into Division 999, mostly made up of former political prisoners. But none of us wanted to fight for the wrong; so we were taken prisoners. By this way I came to the U.S.A. for three years. Now we were able to act at last in favor of our ideas of liberty. The influence of the Nazi superiors was, however, still so strong that prisoners were wounded and even killed for such ideas. So, together with likeminded comrades and with the assistance of American military authorities, anti-Nazi groups were formed at Camp McCain and later on at Camp Devens. I think we made a good political job at Devens. By means of lectures, courses and entertainments, we brought democratic political ideas for the first time to young Germans. We took up, for example, a collection for needy European children (no matter what their nation, religion or race) and another for German children, both amounting to more than $140,000. During this time, I worked as editor of a small self-printed anti-Nazi newspaper for the prisoners . . . At present, I am working with a "*Spruchkammer*" (special denazification

* I don't mean to exaggerate the amount of hostility (should we say with the psychoanalysts, "resistance"?) to Goodman's ideas. His novels and short stories, which are closely related to his political thinking, are winning considerable recognition. And the present book has by no means aroused merely indignation; I might instance the discerning review by Nathan Glick in "The New Leader" of July 6.

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### A Christmas Suggestion

*The price of CARE packages has now been reduced to $10. This is for a 49-lb. package of meat, cereal, butter, sugar, etc.; surplus Army field rations; enough to provide 40 meals.*

*Why not "give" your friends CARE packages for Christmas? That is, let us send a CARE package to one of our families abroad, in your friend's name? Or send a package as your own Christmas gift.*

*Please mark contributions "Christmas Fund" and indicate in what name you want the package sent.*

court). My wife, an architectural draughtsman by profession, is doing her best to build us a new home, which is very, very difficult in Germany. You may imagine how glad and thankful we are for any kind of assistance.

*D. S., Moln-Poll-am-Rhine:* Josef, my husband, has not returned from Russia, where he is prisoner. I know about him only by a comrade who has returned last year. But I am hoping, my husband will return soon—only there are no clothes to give him. For we lost everything when I was imprisoned by the Gestapo. But I *have* got back my two children, who had been in an orphan-asylum, and we are happy to be together now! We live here in 2 very poor rooms with broken walls, and last winter we had to sleep with 3 persons on only one mattress, without blankets. Will it be better next winter? I don't know. I have not recovered my health, which I lost in captivity. But I do not lose hope!

*N.O., Gelsenkirchen:* I am 40 years old and live with my parents who thru the war lost the greater part of their possessions. I myself was a political prisoner for almost nine years—in the various concentration camps. Esterwegen and Sachsenhausen are probably known to you, too. I came home sick. Through the inhuman living conditions, the heaviest imaginable work, bad food, and then working outdoors in every kind of weather, I managed to contract a kidney ailment and rheumatism. Also my wrists are badly damaged, since I was hung up twice by the hands. Since pursuing my profession (clerk) is now out of the question, I have tried to get any sort of job through the State or other Authority. Until now my efforts have all been in vain. Had I been a Nazi or an active official, I might perhaps have found a position long since. Anyhow, that's how it appears here. I'm having just as little success in getting shoes and clothes for myself and my family, which we all need badly.

*K.L., the Saarland:* My mother sends a call for help for herself and for the others. Not a piece of bread for 8 days, not a potato, or meat or anything else for 3 weeks. Many people are taking their lives because of hunger. The misery is indescribable. Whole families are tubercular because of undernourishment. My mother is under a doctor's care. She writes that she can no longer make the trip to the doctor's office, her strength is failing her. She stays in bed all day long because she has nothing to eat and thus she is able to survive. My sister also lives there. She has 8 children. At noon she puts them all to bed until the evening when she gives them some cabbage soup and puts them back to bed. Don't think this is an unusual situation, the same thing occurs everywhere.

*M.H., Stuttgart:* I have received your letter of July 5th and I will try to write in English, what we have felt in reading. We have had bad years and we have lost goods and chattels, but we suffered still more by the knowledge of the inhuman cruelties and crimes done by Germans not only in Germany but also in the occupied countries of Europe. Our son has fought for his anti-fascist conviction and has been imprisoned 2 years. In 1939 he could flee to Sweden. Perhaps we will soon have a meeting again with him and with our daughter-in-law too. She is a jewess and God be praised she has not had the fate like millions of jews. Since the end of the war and the occupation by the American troupes we are free people, but we suffer for the contempt and for the consciousness of guilt, we have to take. Therefore your letter has been so much pleasant, because he proves the belief of American people in international solidarity and we will hope that, one day, Germany can find again a place in the circle of the civilized nations.

*J.F., Neuweid (written in English):* It ist delightful to know that we have friends in the world, who don't vorget us in our hard times. Unspeakable ist the trouble the Nazis brought us anti-fascists. We, who have fought always against Hitler, have now more to suffer as his favourites. You know, myself had to live for a long time in a foreign country. Then I was imprisoned by the Gestapo and had to live 4 years in prison and in houses of correction. Hard work and want of food have destroyed my health. And my family had very much to suffer in this time. We have had no pleasure as anti-fascists and now we have been very poor. And so ist the matter with all anti-fascists. They had to make the great sacrifices and to-day they had to suffer farther, because it wants food, clothing, shoes and coals.

*H.R., Braunschweig:* Up to 1933, I was a teacher here. The Gestapo had a warrant out for me, but I was able to escape with my wife to Holland. We moved to France in 1935 and

### A Letter from Holland

*Dear Friend Nancy Macdonald:*

*Today I received a food parcel, for which my heartiest thanks. You cannot imagine over there what such a package means to us; my wife and children also thank you.*

*Dear Nancy, I returned to Holland sick, worn out by all the suffering I had to endure in German concentration camps. Yes, we anti-fascists were treated very badly there. Of the 40 anti-fascists arrested with me that day in Rotterdam, 38 died of torture and starvation. For four years of my life, I was kept by the Nazis behind electrified wire in Dachau, Buchenwald and other camps. The best of my comrades lost their lives at the hands of those beast-men: such comrades as Sneevliet, Menist, Dollemann. And, dear Nancy, I ask myself sometimes if our sacrifices have not been too big? Yes, German fascism is defeated, but reaction is still strong everywhere. Dear Nancy, there will always be fighting in the world as long as international solidarity is not understood. This we have to achieve, Nancy. Here in Holland, the social-democrats and the communists cry: Down with the Germans! But solidarity, dear Nancy, must include the Germans. It is self-evident, Nancy, that it should not include the ex-Nazis and other political gangsters in Germany (or that kind of people in Holland and America, either!). But against the stream and despite everything, dear Nancy, we must once more reach a fraternal understanding with the German people. IT IS THE ONLY ROAD.*

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### PACKAGES TO RUSSIAN ZONE OF GERMANY

*We are sorry to report that the information, in our August issue, about sending packages to the Russian zone in Germany via a Swiss labor organization, has turned out to be incorrect. (At least, our experience has been that the Swiss central bank refuses to accept the drafts we tried to send through our own bank.)*

*It IS possible to send food packages to the Russian zone, however, through the International Rescue and Relief Committee, 103 Park Ave., New York 17, N. Y. The parcel is called No. B, costs $8.50, weighs about 18 pounds, contains an excellent variety of foods. It takes from 6 to 8 weeks to arrive. The IRRC informs us that they have already received acknowledgement of the receipt of some of these parcels.*

stayed there until 1945. We took part in the French Resistance movement . . . Now I am a teacher in the Kant Normal School here, where some 250 students study to become teachers. My task is to overcome the nationalistic ideas the Third Reich drilled into them and to teach them that war is inhuman and stupid . . . Please don't think me rude if I make another request. Our teaching suffers from lack of books, newspapers, magazines, etc. Can you get me—in English, German or French—sociological works, biographies of statesmen, economic and statistical works, books on life in the USA?

*(NOTE BY D.M.: It is not yet possible to send books, magazines or any printed matter to addresses in Germany. A constant note in the letters we get is the appeal for historical and political material; one has the impression of people cut off from the world for many years now eager to establish contact again, hungry for all sorts of information and ideas they have been starved of since 1933. Yet the stupid and shameful policy of the American occupation authorities is to continue this cultural isolation. What possible justification is there for this?)*

*The wife of a famous brain-surgeon writes us (in English) from the British Zone:* We are deeply grateful for this generous effort to smoothe the rough edges of our present existence. Our family consists of three adults (my husband, my mother, myself) and seven children (five of them mine, two of a homeless friend) . . . May we suggest another family? It is the widow of a close friend, and I had her children in my home last winter for several months, because she lost her home in Berlin. Her husband was Dr. Adolf Reichwein, who was executed in connection with the attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944. This very gifted man was one of our great hopes for the time after the breakdown of the Nazi system. He was a great educationalist. His name was also known in the USA, where he had travelled to collect material for his book, *Rohstoffwirtschaft der Erde,* which also appeared in English. Like many of the other men who with him found death in an attempt to exonerate the name of this country, we miss him now every day. His family consists of his widow and her four children, aged 4 to 13.

*HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN*

This morning the most unusual thing happened right here in our town. I dropped into a tenant's office and while there for about ten minutes two men came in wanting to work. My tenant had run an ad for common laborers, and he said he had been contacted over the phone or at his office by at least a hundred men, all wanting to work. This is the first time in several years that I have had an associate tell me he had been able to turn workers away in numbers to amount to anything. It is a very hopeful sign.

—letter from Austin, Texas, in The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 8.

**WILL YOU UNDERTAKE TO SEND FOOD PACKAGES REGULARLY TO A EUROPEAN FAMILY?**

**Politics, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.**

**I want to help.**

☐ **Please send me the address of a European family, plus full mailing instructions. I will undertake to send them..... package(s) a month.**

☐ **I enclose $..... to pay for ..... CARE packages for Christmas. Please send in the name of .....**

.....

☐ **I enclose $..... to pay for food packages. I will undertake to send you $..... a month to keep up the flow of packages.**

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

**CITY** ..... **UNIT** ..... **STATE** .....

# The Intelligence Office

## "MURDER, INC."

Today a professor of mine, Dr. Jameson Jones, recommended that I read "The Iliad" in the November, 1945, issue of POLITICS. Dr. Jones, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, was, and is, a C.O. He recommended this article because he knew of my hatred for war, as I am his only major student at present.

The coincidence that impresses me is that I chanced to read "Terror in the Air" in the same issue, and in this article I noticed a reference to an American B-17, Murder, Inc. This is really no coincidence at all, merely the culmination of many forces that have been acting on me for over five years. You see, I am the fellow that named that B-17 Murder, Inc. one day in April, 1943, at the AAF overseas send-off point at Kearney, Nebraska.

I offered that name to my crew (I was tail-gunner) because I honestly thought that we would be committing murder before long—and we were. The name was cynically offered; however my crew-mates overlooked my smirk and painted the name on the plane that day.

Murder, Inc. was my plane for only one or two missions. It was an unlucky ship from the first mission it flew, May 14, 1943. Every trip we used it we brought it back with either engine trouble or battle damage. One day when it was out of order we used another plane, and Murder, Inc. was held at the base, Polebrook, North Hants, as a spare. Someone had trouble on takeoff and Murder, Inc. had to be used, it came back from that mission shot all to pieces. My crew had "Murder, Inc." written on leather name plates which were sewn on our flight jackets, and we ripped them off when we found out our old ship would be hospitalized for a long time. It came back on the regular list at about the time I finished my tour of twenty-five missions, October 10, 1943.

I write this to explain that Murder, Inc. was given that name because of reasons near allied to reasons offered by every C.O. I felt then, and I still feel that every B-17 was as evil as the Brooklyn gang that bore the original name. If there is

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another war I will be more courageous, I won't fly the big ones.

CENTRE COLLEGE
DANVILLE, KY.

ROSCOE M. PIERSON
*Ex-T/Sgt. 14040421*
*508 Bomb Sqdn. (H)*

## EXPLANATION WANTED

Sir:

I shall hope to find in the columns of your paper an explanation of Maurice Goldbloom's review in your July issue of Corliss Lamont's *The Peoples of the Soviet Union*. Or can it be that I . . . have failed to grasp the subtleties? It is so widely accepted now that the old Bolshevists were framed in the interests of a rising bureaucracy that to find a man who writes as Mr. Goldbloom does is like finding a man who believes that the earth is flat. But if his opinion reflects that of your magazine, then it cannot be but that it is Stalinistic. Heretofore I have read POLITICS as an expression against the sectarianism of the minority leftwing groups. Mr. Goldbloom's article makes me wonder whether I have not been a little gullible. Frankly, does POLITICS agree that Stalin has been a "peerless leader," Vishinsky a man of justice, and those last old Bolshevists "a whole nest of the vilest reptiles?"

SANTA ANA, CALIF. NARDA ZOELLER

*—Mr. Goldbloom states that he has definite and conclusive proof that the earth IS flat, and will be glad to present it to Miss Zoeller on request.—ED.*

## THE OAK RIDGE PICKETING

Sir:

While agreeing with the majority of your Comment on the proposed picketing of the Atom Bomb Plant at Oak Ridge, Tenn., I would like to point out one factual error and to make an additional comment:

(1) The Committee for Non-Violent Revolution had nothing to do with shifting the picket-line from Oak Ridge to Washington under pressure of C.I.O. and W.D.L. hostility. The picketing was both planned and carried out by an independent committee, called, for the occasion, The Committee to Avoid World War III. When the Committee to Avoid World War III decided at the last minute to shift the demonstration to Washington, the C.N.V.R. was neither financially able nor tactically desirous of conducting a hastily planned and disruptive, rival demonstration at Oak Ridge. Several members of the CNVR made the trip to Washington wishing that it were possible to have a larger and more militant demonstration at Oak Ridge, but anxious to support whatever public protest was being made against the manufacture and testing of the atom bomb.

(2) Along with the courage to take action in defiance of the police, the state, and the conservative business unions, serious revolutionists require the courage to set aside intellectual duties, on occasion, in order to participate directly in the current struggles. Our words gradually lose their freshness and we become hollow men unless our personal lives reflect our ideals, both of resistance and of brotherhood.

I do not ask that you participate in every action to which


## *What Is the League For Mutual Aid?*

**It is an organization which serves persons within the liberal, labor and progressive movements when they have personal emergencies to meet.**

**Applicants for help need not be members of the League. Likewise, it matters not whether they are left wingers or right wingers, Catholics, Protestants, Jews or Atheists, A. F. of L., CIO or independent unionists. The League has one aim: to stand by all men and women of progressive convictions who suddenly need a loan, a job or some less tangible personal aid.**

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**It was founded twenty-six years ago to befriend conscientious objectors upon their release from prison. With the recognition generally that the strength of an organization equals that of its individual members, the League grew to be a ways and means committee for America's liberals and radicals.**

**Operating expenses are met from membership dues—$5.00 a year—and contributions. Loans come from a revolving loan fund in which idle money of Mutual Aiders is deposited with the understanding that it can be withdrawn on twenty-four hours' notice.**

Adelaide Schulkind, Exec. Secy., the League for Mutual Aid, 104 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y.

Please enroll me as a member of the League for Mutual Aid.
Herewith $..... (Annual dues: $5 or more according to ability to pay; can be paid in $1 instalments.)

Enclosed is $..... to help carry on your work.

NAME .....ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... UNIT ..... STATE .....

(Membership dues and contributions are deductible from taxable income)

*Note: "Politics" has donated this space because we are enthusiastic about the League and its work.*


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you give your editorial support, but did you not feel a little strange at being a) the only member of the committee who favored carrying out the demonstration, as originally planned; b) the only member of the committee who could not spare the time to participate? No doubt this was an unconscious inconsistency which resulted from severe editorial pressure, but it is an inconsistency against which all of us have to guard, because revolutions will never be made by words without deeds.

NEWARK, N. J. DAVE DELLINGER

*—(1) I wrote not that the CNVR sponsored the group but rather that some members of the CNVR were prominent in the group; since they—Dellinger included—agreed to the shift, they bear some responsibility for it. It is news to me, by the way, that our tiny handful was officially titled The Committee to Avoid World War III. (More accurate, though less dramatic, would have been: The Committee to Avoid Offending the CIO.) But seriously: is it not time we gave up such childish magniloquence, which the CNVR has gone in for before I'm sorry to say, and behaved more modestly and sensibly? It reminds me unpleasantly of the palmy days of Trotskyism: vast phrases to conceal the poverty of content.*

*(2) Yes, I did feel strange about it. But it seemed to me I simply could not at the time take a week, perhaps more, off my main job, which is to put out* POLITICS *(and which, incidentally, appears to me as also a "deed"). Perhaps I was wrong, I certainly did feel strange, though I should also have felt strange had I decided to go.—ED.*

## PHYSICIST WANTS IN

Sir:

I could not let Milton Subotsky's letter concerning "The Root is Man" pass without some kind of comment. As an engineer-physicist I confess that I must blush at the flattery he bestows upon my profession, but I think most of us can say quite as quickly—"No thanks." Neither we nor any other single group of men are fit to be the elite.

I believe that I understand in a vague way what is our method of approach to problems in natural science—first, one must develop a theory to explain observable phenomena, and then conduct experiments to verify this theory, within the limits of human ability to interpret results. I believe that one can apply this philosophy to human relations without discovering that Science is either God or the Devil.

Do you know why intelligent scientists do not bother to speculate as to what kind of life exists on Venus? Because we have not yet developed an experimental means of checking whatever theory we might have on the subject. And until the scientist can develop a direct experimental check of his theories of human relations, he is no *more* fit to rule than a cannibal is to run a research laboratory (although some do). The most successful scientist is one who can develop an intuition for evolving theories that will work, for life is too short to try out every idea that pops into his head. Likewise one who develops a moral intuition (call it conscience if you will) towards social problems seems to make out just about as well as one who applies the slide rule and the quantum theory to a complex problem like war. I do not think that Subotsky will find much of a following among scientists and engineers for his "managerial collectivism," unless it be from that minority which has become enthralled with power from association with the militarists in and out of uniform. The latter are not in good standing at the present time.

My own confusion has been cleared considerably by the *New Roads* series, for I am yet young enough not to be cynical about this new social philosophy which is even older than Lao-Tse. I think you should know that there are about as many natural scientists who have not bowed the knee to Baal as you will find in any professional group. Your championing of the cause of the "bad" CO's has converted me to the sort of movement which is under development. Count me in.

PHILADELPHIA, PA. J. KENNETH RICHMOND

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## "HOW BIG CAN THE FAMILY GET?"

Sir:

Your September issue prints a letter from Pierson Ostrow taking you to task for your lack of faith in the Socialist Party. Among the many radical things going on in the SP family, Ostrow suggests that its governing body recently fathered the Committee for Non-Violent Revolution. Perhaps you would like to set the record straight on this point.

CNVR was an outgrowth of the February Conference, which itself resulted from a Call signed by thirteen c.o's. The Socialist Party had no relationship to this correspondence (except as a somewhat negative referent in much of the critical discussion), or to the subsequent Call and Conference.

Quite a number of its left-wing members did become interested on their own initiative, and I understand that just before the Conference, its NEC passed a resolution stating that while the SP in no sense sponsored the Conference, it would not bring proceedings against members who attended. A message of greetings arrived at the Conference from the YPSL, but Party headquarters remained silent. Notwithstanding Ostrow, the Party has never found occasion to declare itself on post-Conference developments.

Ostrow's letter raises an interesting question—whether the present NEC of the Party does in fact approve what it sees in CNVR, and rejoices in the participation of some party members. The tentative statement of principles underlying CNVR tries for a fresh start but closely resembles an anarcho-syndicalist manifesto, with non-violence woven in. Does the NEC really feel as Ostrow would have it that this is all in the family? If so, how big can the family get in its estimation before someone has to move out?

SAN FRANCISCO LEWIS HILL

*In Norman's house there are many mansions—D. M.*

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## THE HIROSHIMA "NEW YORKER"

Sir:

May I add something to your comment on the Hiroshima *New Yorker*? The editors of that magazine imagined, and you yourself in your comment take for granted, that the Hersey piece was an indictment of atomic warfare. Its real effect, however, was quite the opposite. What it did was to minimize the atom bomb by treating it as though it belonged to the familiar order of catastrophes—fires, floods, earthquakes—which we have always had with us and which offer to the journalist, from Pliny down to Mr. Hersey, an unparalleled wealth of human interest stories, examples of the marvelous, and true-life narratives of incredible escapes. The grandness of the disaster and the smallness of the victims are ideally suited to the methods of journalism, which exaggerates and foreshortens simultaneously, The interview with the survivors, *(Mrs. Margaret O'Reilly, of 1810 Oak Street, housewife, speaking to reporters, said: "When I first smelled smoke, I threw an old coat on and woke the baby," etc.)* is the classic technique for reporting such events—it serves well enough to give some sense, slightly absurd but nonetheless correct, of the continuity of life. But with Hiroshima, where the continuity of life was, for the first time, put into question, and by man, the existence of any survivors is an irrelevancy, and the interview with the survivors is an insipid falsification of the truth of atomic warfare. To have done the atom bomb justice, Mr. Hersey would have had to interview the dead.

But of this Mr. Hersey is, both literally and temperamentally, incapable. He is the *New Yorker's* reporter-at-large, not Virgil or Dante—hell is not his sphere. Yet it is precisely in this sphere—that is, in the moral world—that the atom bomb exploded. To treat it journalistically, in terms of measurable destruction, is, in a sense, to deny its existence, and this is what Mr. Hersey has accomplished for the *New Yorker* readers. Up to August 31 of this year, no one dared think of Hiroshima—it appeared to us all as a kind of hole in human history. Mr. Hersey has filled that hole with busy little Japanese Methodists; he has made it familiar and safe, and so, in the final sense, boring. As for the origin of the trouble, the question of intention and guilt—which is what made Hiroshima more horrifying, to say the least, than the Chicago Fire—the bombers, the scientists, the government, appear in this article to be as inadvertent as Mrs. O'Leary's cow.

There is no question that the *New Yorker's* editors did not deliberately plan the August 31 issue as an anniversary celebration of the atom bomb (though one wonders whether they were not competing just a little with it in this journalistic coup that allowed a single article to obliterate the contents of the magazine). The point is that the *New Yorker* cannot be against the atom bomb, no matter how hard it tries, just as it could not, even in this moral "emergency," eliminate the cigarette and perfume advertising that accompanied Mr. Hersey's text. Since the *New Yorker* has not, so far as we know, had a rupture with the government, the scientists, and the boys in the bomber, it can only assimilate the atom bomb to itself, to Westchester County, to smoked turkey, and the Hotel Carlyle. ("Whenever I stay at the Carlyle, I feel like sending it a thank-you note," says a middle-aged lady in an advertisement). It is all one world.

NEW YORK CITY — MARY MCCARTHY

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# Politicking

The cost of putting out the magazine has risen so sharply since last spring that we now face a full-fledged financial crisis. Such of our readers as feel more than a casual interest in the fate of POLITICS can help us by:

(1) Giving subscriptions to their friends for Christmas (see the ad on the back cover).

(2) Sending in addresses of bookstores and newsstands in their home towns which might handle the magazine if approached by us.

(3) Sending in lists of likely people for us to circularize for subscriptions.

(4) Advertising in POLITICS, or getting others to do so. Our rates are: $90 a page, $50 ½ page, $25 ¼ page, $15 ⅛ page, $7 for an ad 1 inch by 3½ inches. Classified ads are $1 a printed line (10 words average). (We'll be glad to mail, on request, one or more of our new rate cards.) Our present circulation is 5,000, divided approximately as follows: paid subscriptions, 3,200; newsstand sales, 1,400; complimentary subs (mostly to Europe) and exchange copies, 400.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE: *Gelo and Andrea* are French socialists, male and female, who took part in the Resistance, belong to no party. They are regular contributors to POLITICS . . . *Ralph Manheim's* translations are well known; he has contributed satire to "The New Republic" and other magazines . . . *William Petersen*, recently demobilized after four years in the army, is a graduate student at the New School for Social Research in New York City . . . *European* is the pen-name of an editor and scholar who took part in the 1905 Russian Revolution; his special interest is Byzantine and Hellenistic history; he lives in France . . . *James Blish* was trained as a zoologist at Rutgers, did graduate work at Columbia, served in the army as a laboratory technician, and is now a free-lance writer and the manager of a phonograph record company. He lives in New York City . . . *Marshall Hodgson* was a C.O. during the war, now works as a statistical clerk; he is a graduate student in history at the University of Chicago.

Lamenting, in the current issue of *Partisan Review*, the lack of "common presuppositions" among New York intellectuals, William Barrett contributes to fellow-feeling with this illustration of his thesis: "Mr. Dwight Macdonald manages to publish from the heart of New York a magazine which, for its crackerbox bluster, wide-eyed idealism, and ingenue dogmatism, might just as well be put out at some tiny whistle-stop in Oklahoma. [For the benefit of our European readers: a "whistle stop" is a village so small that the train stops there only occasionally.—DM] Without wishing in the least to minimize Macdonald's extraordinary accomplishment in this, I do think it must be clear to any one that if there were such a thing as a New York intellectual climate, a New York intellectual atmosphere or current of ideas—if, that is, the metropolis really functioned as a cultural center—even he might find it immensely more difficult, perhaps impossible, to pull off such a trick."

Flattered though I am at this recognition of my editorial talents, I find Barrett's outburst a curious one for several reasons. For one thing, POLITICS evidently irritates him (and, possibly, his fellow-editors on PR) so much that he cannot even abuse it accurately: bluster and dogmatism are, I submit, more characteristic of the above passage itself than of POLITICS; and since when is idealism, whether wide-eyed or

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squint-eyed, a *defect* in a radical magazine? For another, I don't know what contributions to metropolitan culture give Barrett the authority to speak in its name with so *ex cathedra* an air, but I do know that his excommunication produces an odd feeling in one who for some twenty years has been active in various realms of the city's intellectual life, including six years as an editor of *Partisan Review* itself. (I have myself sometimes been guilty of an urban snobbishness towards "the provinces"—a snobbishness which is simply a form of provincialism—but I have never achieved the sublimity of Barrett's urbanism.) And for a third, Barrett's tirade hardly seems calculated to create that sense of community whose lack he rightly deplores in New York intellectual life.

But, of course, his point is that if such a community *did* exist, then POLITICS would find itself excluded. *In a word, a properly homogeneous "New York intellectual atmosphere" would freeze out alien tendencies.* Excluding the "alien" is typical of totalitarian culture. Barrett's mode of criticism so closely resembles that of the *New Masses*, as the crudity and intemperance of his style so strongly recalls that magazine's polemical tone, as to suggest that PR's present offensive against Stalinism—the sole remnant of its former political partisanship—is of the pot-and-kettle variety. Its recent editorial on the "liberal fifth-column"—which also came from Barrett's pen—is another case in point: its simple black-and-white pattern, its substitution of shrill abuse for analysis would have fitted into *PM's* editorial page, with the single substitution of the Kremlin for the U. S. State Department. Still another recent instance was the personal attack on Paul Goodman, under the guise of a book review, in which, with that lack of bluster that is the mark of the authentic New Yorker, Barrett describes the author he is reviewing as "an intellectual adventurer and playboy" who "debases and sensationalizes" Freudian sexual theories; all this in two flip paragraphs, no evidence given, no arguments, simply . . . excommunication.

Perhaps Barrett is right after all. If this is really "the New York intellectual atmosphere," I think I should find the air clearer and the company better among the grizzly bears of Oklahoma.

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